

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

Young people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines face numerous challenges. One of the major challenges is the high level of unemployment. Data from 2001 population and housing census shows that the 15-29 age cohort comprised 12.7 percent of the unemployed population compared with 14.2 percent in 1991. The number of **unemployed males** 15 - 29 increased by 6 percent, and the unemployment rate from 26.6 percent in 1991 to 33.8 percent in 2001. During the intercensal period the number of **unemployed females** declined by 22.3 percent, falling from 35.2 percent in 1991 to 31.1 percent in 2001. The most significant declines (26.6 percent) were in the 15-19 age group with 35.2 percent, followed by the 25-29 group with 15.4 percent.

Other challenges include underachievement in the educational system, rising levels of violence and criminal activity including the push from drug traffickers to reach wider and more lucrative markets. As a result youth become vulnerable to involvement in criminal activity that consumes their communities. To illustrate, many youths have died before their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday as a result of gang warfare fuelled by the drug economy. Statistics show that during the last three years, deaths to young people between age 15 – 29 years averaged 5 percent of total deaths.

In addition, due to a myriad of push (poverty, lack of communication in the home) and pull (somewhere to relieve stress or to hang out with your peers) factors, young people have been finding their livelihoods, social networks and most of their leisure time on the streets (on the bloc). In response to this, international and national agencies including the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Youth Department have been working hard to discern the exact nature of these activities and their vulnerability to crime and violence that adolescents experience while they are “hanging out”.

Urgent attempts should be made toward addressing the needs of youth who spend so much time “liming” on the bloc, back into meaningful activities in the communities. It will therefore be critical to support strong family support and social networks of these individuals, some of whom

may have felt rejected or disillusioned. This is not a new issue but one which calls for greater attention and understanding.

As most youth on the bloc are male, masculinity and socialization of boys and men becomes a critical area in need of further understanding and discussion. In particular, existing social and cultural norms that encourage “hyper-masculinity” and violent expressions of manhood may have linkages to young male vulnerability to criminality, violence and other risky behaviours such as drug use and unprotected sex.

Humans are by nature social beings and that our relationships – whether they are with the family, peers or community at large - shape the way we perceive and interpret our life experiences. These social relationships are key in helping youth shift their identity and sense of belonging off the bloc where youth are vulnerable to engaging in crime, violence and other high risk activities.

### **BACKGROUND**

Youth in the Caribbean face significant challenges. Significant levels of poverty, non-attendance at school and early pregnancy are experienced by young people between the ages of 10 – 25 throughout the Caribbean. These conditions are of concern because the Caribbean’s development is heavily dependent on the future of its youth.

Adolescents and youth (10 -24 years) today represent the biggest generation in human history as one-third (1/3) to almost one-half (½) of the population in developing countries is under 20 years. It is therefore important that their transition from adolescence to adulthood be understood in the larger development context of poverty, social inequalities, low quality education, gender discrimination, unemployment and health systems which tend not to respond to their needs.

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines the **draft** National Youth Policy has as its goal to act as a guide to policy makers and policy implementing agencies as to the role that youths should play, and the position they should occupy in the society. The policy will provide a framework that seeks to remove any constraints of a social, cultural, economic, political, religious or

administrative nature that inhibit the effective growth and development of youth, and prevent their full integration into the mainstream of national development.

The **draft** policy addresses education where it will ensure that education is compulsory up to 15 years throughout the country and that mechanisms are in place to provide basic knowledge and skills that will serve as a foundation for the future of the youth. It also addresses health, for the individual to be mentally and physically capable of playing his or her role in nation building, the provision of adequate health services, and training and education in healthy habits/lifestyles.

The **draft** policy document in its reference to employment says that meaningful employment of the youth would not only sustain but also improve productivity. At the same time employment would dispel the tendencies toward social misconduct (e.g drug use, crime, delinquency) which are inherent in idleness and unemployment.

HIV/AIDS is a major challenge for adolescents/youths since some are infected and others affected through loss of parents and “significant others”. In addition they are bombarded with exposure to mass media and information technology, the global youth culture and reconstruction of regional and national youth cultures. Conflicting messages are disseminated to youth through these mediums.

In many developing countries, adolescents are having their first sexual encounter at an early age; many adolescent girls become mothers and are often denied access to education either through legislation or a value system which prohibits access. Available statistics for the past three years indicate that on average 20 percent of total births belong to adolescents.

Adolescent boys and girls who live in especially difficult circumstances, many in homes prone to gender-based violence living outside the protective structures of family and school, engage in risky behaviours such as unprotected sex, gangs, crime and drugs.

Within the context of St.Vincent and the Grenadines, concern has been raised about the “bloc” culture. It has been acknowledged that data and information on the exact nature of activities on

the bloc is unknown. Anecdotal evidence suggests that youth on the bloc are engaged in criminal activity and risk behaviours. However, this is speculation and without reliable data it is difficult to discern the exact nature of activities undertaken by youth on the bloc. It is therefore critical to build the knowledge base necessary to collect data on these activities and behaviours, which will inform the development of evidence-based programmes and policies addressing problems that might be revealed through research.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To increase the knowledge base on youth and masculinity in St.Vincent and the Grenadines.
2. To provide data necessary to inform the development of youth-responsive programmes and policies in the following areas: education (including sexual and reproductive health) for in-school and out of school youth, job training/employment; violence prevention (including violence against women and girls); youth-friendly spaces (i.e. spaces off the street where youth can access information on employment/jobs, information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention; violence prevention services).

### **QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT**

Questions for the questionnaire to be used for the “Youth on the Bloc” survey were first conceptualized by a Research Advisory Committee specially put in place by the Youth Department with support from UNFPA.

The Research Advisory Committee comprised representation from the following agencies:

Youth Affairs Department

National Commission on Crime Prevention

St.Vincent and the Grenadines Cadet Corps

Statistical Office

Education Project Management Unit

National Aids Secretariat  
US Peace Corps  
Community Development Division  
Adult and Continuing Education  
Marion House  
Gender Affairs Department  
CYP Youth Forum rep.  
Caricom Youth Ambassadors

Several drafts of the questionnaire were reviewed by UNFPA, the RAC, as well as the Consultant for the project. Consequently, changes were made to some questions while new questions were added. The final questionnaire (see Appendix 1) that was used for the field work contained 43 questions.

A separate questionnaire was developed for the conduct of focus discussions in three communities.

### **SAMPLE DESIGN & METHODOLOGY**

Members of staff of the Youth Affairs Department as part of their work programme, have been doing excellent work with the youths in several communities throughout St.Vincent and the Grenadines. They have been having discussions with the young people with a view to find solutions to some of the problems they face whether they are economic, social or emotional. These activities laid the ground work for the questionnaire to be administered to the youth on the bloc in twenty-one communities.

Essentially, in some communities the task of administering the instrument was organized to coincide with the “male free talk” sessions done by the staff of the Youth Department. These sessions targeted males in discussions focusing on developing positive relationships.

Eleven enumerators conducted either sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) interviews in the following **rural** communities: Barrouallie, Bequia, Byera, Carrierre, Chapmans, Georgetown, Greggs,

Lauders, Park Hill, Richland Park, Rose Bank, Rose Hall, Sandy Bay and Union Island. Interviews were also done in following **urban** communities: Calliaqua, Campden Park, Green Hill, Lodge Village, Ottley Hall, Redemption Sharpes and Roseau. Enumerators also travelled to the Grenadines islands of Bequia and Union Island to conduct interviews.

There are different levels of crime and violence in the various communities however the communities of Redemption Sharpes and Ottley Hall appear to have the highest levels of crime and crime related activities.

In each community, the staff member from the Youth Affairs Department would have alerted the youth bloc group of the impending visit by the enumerator to conduct the interviews. There were instances where the staff member actually accompanied the enumerator.

Each interview which would have lasted between twenty (20) and twenty-five (25) minutes was conducted on an individual basis when the group was gathered on afternoons or evenings together on the bloc. On average a single bloc would have had in excess of twenty (20) youths. In most cases volunteers from the group would come forward to be interviewed until the required sample size was achieved. The numbers of females lining on each bloc were relatively small. As a result, enumerators were instructed to include all females in the sample from each bloc.

Despite the survey instrument being user-friendly, the open ended questions represented a real problem during the coding exercise. This was a major challenge. The open-ended questions were coded according to the most frequently given response and with a sample size of three hundred and fifty (350) one could imagine how huge that task could have been.

Data entry took approximately three weeks to complete. All the data was entered into Microsoft Access and tables were generated through Microsoft Excel for analysis.

## **SURVEY OF YOUTH ON THE BLOC**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

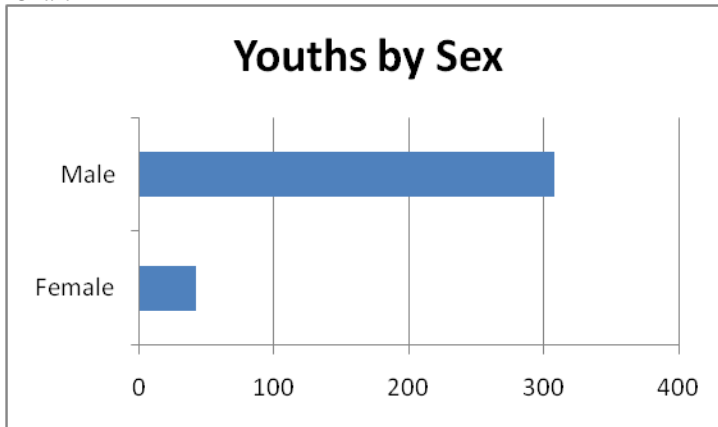
- ♣ more males (88 percent) than females (12 percent) who hang out “on the bloc”, participated in the survey.
- ♣ the age group, 16 – 20 years had the largest number of youths while the youngest age group 10 – 15 years contributed only 4 percent.
- ♣ almost 28 percent of the youths completed Form 5 at the secondary level.
- ♣ just over 55 percent were gainfully employed at the time of the survey.
- ♣ a significant number (78 percent) did not have any special skill or training.
- ♣ most of the youths (77 percent) still lived with their families.
- ♣ of those who still lived with family, the majority (40.8 percent) lived in a single parent household.
- ♣ a large percentage (73 percent) stated they had a “good” relationship with the persons they live with.
- ♣ just under 41 percent believed that the income of the persons they live with was “manageable”.
- ♣ the five main things that happen on the bloc are: “smoking of marijuana”, “drinking of alcohol”, “playing games”, “cooking” and being engaged in “arguments and fights”.
- ♣ 65 percent of the youths are of the opinion that the bloc serves a purpose.
- ♣ only 17 percent experienced violence in a relationship as a victim or as a perpetrator.
- ♣ 65 percent have never attended sessions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS.
- ♣ a little more than 68 percent of the youths have a sexual partner.
- ♣ almost 49 percent of those who had a sexual partner do not use condoms every time they have sex.
- ♣ 62 percent of the youths stated that they did not have children.

## DETAILS OF YOUTH ON THE BLOC SURVEY FINDINGS

**Table 1.1**

<b>Youths by Sex</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	42	12.0%
Male	308	88.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 1

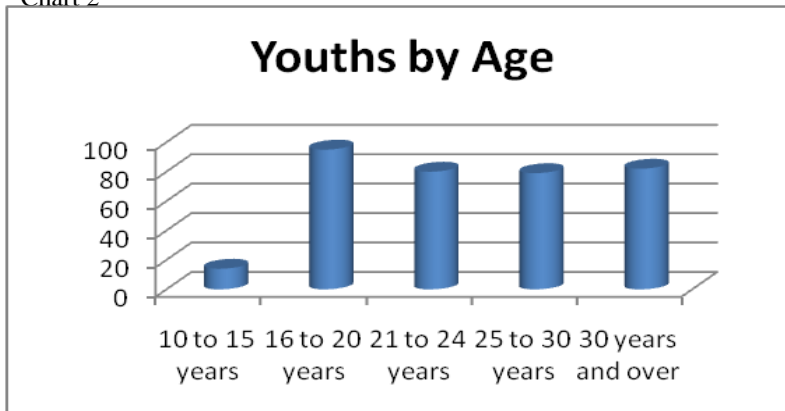


As can be seen in **Table 1.1**, the number of male youths who lime on the bloc outnumber the females quite significantly, 88 percent males compared to 12 percent females.

**Table 1.2**

<b>Youths by Age</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
10 to 15 years	14	4.0%
16 to 20 years	95	27.1%
21 to 24 years	80	22.9%
25 to 30 years	79	22.6%
30 years and over	82	23.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 2





**Table 1.2**, and the graph that follows, shows the age distribution of the Youths on the bloc. The 16 – 20 age group provided the highest number of participants in the survey, just over 27 percent. The youngest age group, 10 – 15 contributed the least number, 4 percent. The remaining age groups averaged more than 20 percent with the 21 -24 years age group (22.9 percent), 21 – 24 years age group (22.6 percent) and the 30 years and over (23.4 percent).

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**Table 1.3**

<b>Youths by Grade/Form attained</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Grade 2 – 6 (age 7 – 11)	70	20.0%
Grade 7 – 9 (age 12 – 14)	31	8.9%
Junior 2 - 5	9	2.7%
Senior 1 – 3 (age 12 – 14)	30	8.6%
Form 1 – 3 (age 12 – 14)	50	14.3%
Form 4 (age 15)	40	11.4%
Form 5 (age 16)	97	27.7%
Year 1 (age 17+)	2	0.6%
Year 2 (age 18+)	21	6.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Primary education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines begins at age 5 (Grade K) and continues through ages 6 – 11 (Grade 1 – Grade 6). Secondary education begins at age 11 or 12 (Form 1) and continues through ages 12 – 16 (Form 2 – Form 5). There is no policy on compulsory education but there is universal access to education for all.

The survey sought to find out what grade or form the youth attained at the last educational institution that he/she attended.

A little less than 28 percent completed Form 5 at a secondary institution while 14.3 percent quit secondary school between Form 1 and Form 5 and another 11.4 percent ended their secondary school education at Form 4 (**Table 1.3**).

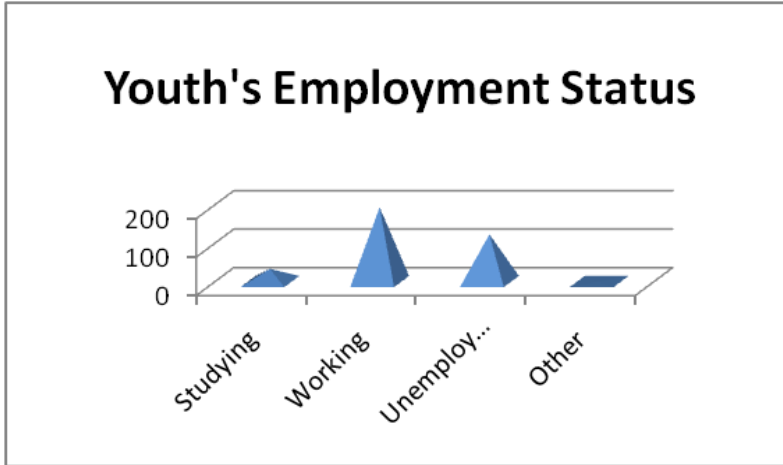
However, the results show that quite a number of the surveyed youths did not have a secondary education. Twenty (20) percent attained between Grade 2 – 6, 8.9 percent between Grade 7 -9 and 8.6 percent between Senior 1 -3 at the Primary level.

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**Table 1.4**

<b>Youths by What are you doing now?</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Studying	33	9.4%
Working	193	55.1%
Unemployed	123	35.1%
Other	1	0.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Chart 3



Extended periods of unemployment among the young are hugely detrimental to a person’s future employment and health prospects. The current and future costs to society of dealing with these consequences of youth unemployment will be huge.

It has been observed that levels of unemployment tend to be two or three times higher for young people than for the adult population. In addition for growing numbers of young people, employment is precarious and may not provide an income sufficient to cover basic necessities.

Therefore for the Youth on the Bloc Survey, the youths were asked “what are you doing now?” to determine their employment status.

More than half of those interviewed (55.1 percent) were gainfully employed at the time of the survey while a significant 35 percent of the youths did not have a job (**Table 1.4**). In the age group 16 – 20 years, 35.6 percent were employed and 41 percent were unemployed. The 21 – 24 years age group had 60 percent working and 37.5 percent not working. There were similar statistics for the 25 – 30 age group with 60.7 percent working and 39.2 percent not working. The

30 years and over age group had the highest percentage of employed persons, 73.2 percent with the unemployed being 24.3 percent of the total in that age group (**Table 1.5**).

Just over 9 percent were still “*studying*” at an educational institution. Most of these were students within the age group 16 – 20 years (63.6 percent) followed by 24.2 percent in the youngest age group 10 – 15 years.

**Table 1.5**  
**Youths by Age and Employment Status**

Age	Studying	Working	Unemployed	Other	Total
10 to 15 years	8	3	3	-	<b>14</b>
16 to 20 years	21	34	39	1	<b>95</b>
21 to 24 years	2	48	30	-	<b>80</b>
25 to 30 years	-	48	31	-	<b>79</b>
30 years and over	2	60	20	-	<b>82</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>350</b>

**Table 1.6**

Youths by do you have any special skill or training	Total	Percent
Yes	77	22.0%
No	273	78.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 4



It has been said that a young person will not be able to build essential skills and competencies and be able to feel safe; cared for, valued and spiritually grounded unless their family and community provide them with the supports and opportunities they need along the way.

**Table 1.6** indicates that 78 percent of the youths who participated in the survey said they did not have any special skill or training. For those who had some sort of skill or training, 24.7 percent were masons, almost 20 percent were carpenters and nearly 15.6 percent had skills or were trained in auto repairs, (**Table 1.7**). The table also shows that some youths had training in computer repairs, welding, plumbing and as an electrician. Other skills that were mentioned include sewing, chef and painting.

**Table 1.7**

<b>Youths by type of skill/training</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Auto repairs/mechanic	12	15.6%
Carpentry	15	19.5%
Computer repairs	5	6.5%
Electrician	7	9.1%
Mason	19	24.7%
Welding	5	6.5%
Plumbing	7	9.1%
Other Skills	7	9.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 1.8**

<b>Youths by where was training done</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
On the job	55	71.4%
Skills Training Center	8	10.4%
Technical College	9	11.7%
Other	5	6.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

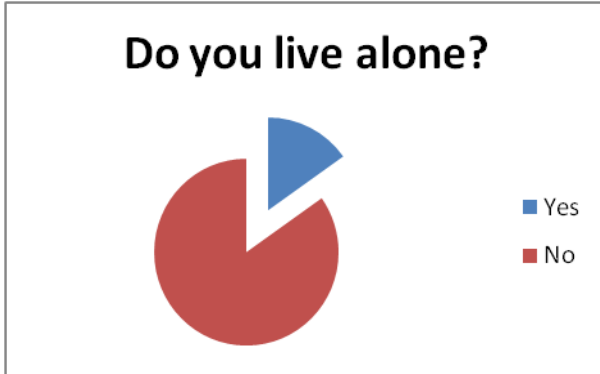
The majority of those who reported that they had done some training did the training while they were on the job (71.4 percent). Among the others, 11.7 percent had their training done at the St.Vincent Technical College while 10.4 percent attended the Skills Training Center to receive training in their particular skill (**Table 1.8**).

Other training venues that were mentioned included the National Center of Technical Innovation (NCTI) where training in computers is done, the Multipurpose Center where students learn woodwork, metal works and do electrical training and the Liberty Lodge Training Center where woodwork and computer training are provided.

**Table 1.9**

<b>Youths by do you live alone</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	53	15.1%
No	297	84.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 5



The youths on the bloc were asked whether or not they lived alone. **Table 1.9** reveals that 84.9 percent of the youths did not live alone. The remaining 15.1 percent were living by themselves.

**Table 1.10**

<b>Youths by with whom do you live</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Boyfriend	8	2.7%
Family	228	76.8%
Friends	10	3.4%
Girlfriend	43	14.5%
Other	8	2.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Chart 6



**Table 1.10** shows that 76.8 percent of the youths still live with their family and 14.5 percent of the men have moved on to settle with their girlfriends. Only 2.7 percent of the women who participated in the survey were living with their boyfriends while 3.4 percent of the entire group lived with friends.

**Table 1.11**

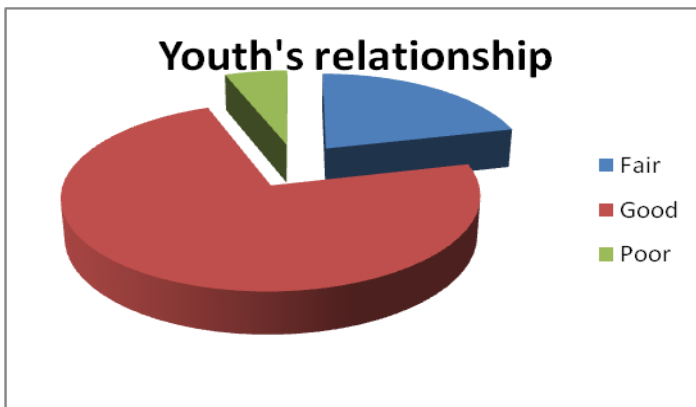
<b>Youths living with family by type of family</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Both Parents	74	32.5%
Both Parents & Grand Parents	14	6.1%
One Parent	93	40.8%
One Parent & Grand Parents	19	8.3%
Other	28	12.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

For the youths who were still living with family, 32.5 percent had both parents in the household and 6.1 percent had both parents and grand parents (**Table 1.11**). At the same time, 40.8 percent of the youths, the majority, lived in single parent households while 12.3 percent lived with “*other*” family such as aunts, uncles, brother and or sister.

**Table 1.12**

<b>Youths by relationship with persons you live with</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Fair	63	21.2%
Good	217	73.1%
Poor	17	5.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 7



A significant 73.1 percent of those interviewed stated that they had a “good” relationship with the persons they were living with **(Table 1.12)**. Only 5.7 percent had a “poor” relationship with the persons they live with.

**Table 1.13**

<b>Youths by how you describe the home environment where you live</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Noisy with arguments and commess	51	14.6%
Boring and lonely	14	4.0%
Good communication & cooperation	9	2.6%
Caring with lots of love	14	4.0%
Loving friendly & sharing	52	14.8%
Quiet, peaceful and comfortable	62	17.7%
We have love and harmony	23	6.6%
Very peaceful	31	8.8%
Respect and love for each other	33	9.4%
Stressful at times, parents too nagging	23	6.6%
Poor communication in the home	10	2.9%
Always nice and good	11	3.1%
Other	17	4.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The home environment where the youth grow up has a direct impact on their achievements later in life. The parents or family relatives with whom the youth live, act as the decision maker, the supporter, the mediator and as the teacher.

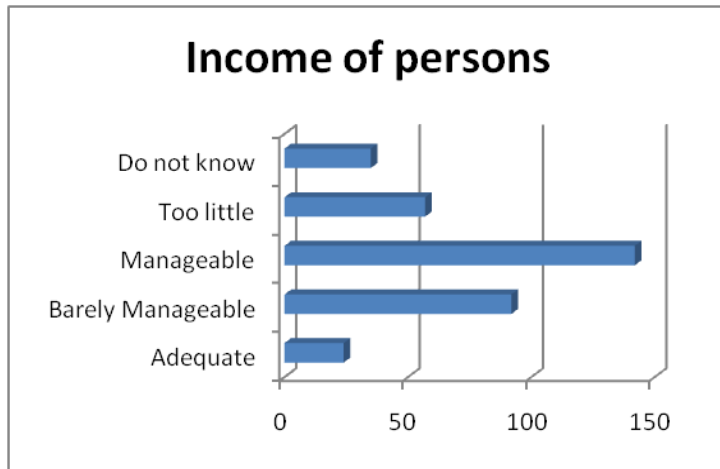
**Table 1.13** illustrates several responses as the youths describe the home environment in which they live; “quiet, peaceful and comfortable”, “loving, friendly and sharing”, “respect and love for each other”, “very peaceful” and “we have love and harmony” were some of the pleasantries given by the youths in relation to their home environment.

On the other hand, revelations such as “noisy with arguments and commess”, “stressful at times, parents too nagging”, “poor communication in the home” and “boring and lonely”, gives the impression that some youths are seemingly under some sort of pressure and that the home environment is not always pleasant.

**Table 1.14**

<b>Youths by how would you describe the income of the persons you live with</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Adequate	24	6.8%
Barely Manageable	92	26.3%
Manageable	142	40.6%
Too little	57	16.3%
Do not know	35	10.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 8



Household income is the combined gross income of all the members of a household who are 15 years old and older. The members of the household do not have to be related in any way. Some households have a primary or sole income earner. This person contributes the largest portion of household income generally covering most household expenses.

**Table 1.14** shows the results when the youths were asked to describe the income of the persons they were living with. Just over 40 percent described the income as “*manageable*” while 26.3 percent said it was “*barely manageable*”. In addition, 16.3 percent were of the opinion that the income of the household was “*too little*” and 6.8 percent were satisfied that the income was “*adequate*”.



**Table 1.15**

<b>Youths by how long you have been liming on the bloc</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1 - 6 months	28	8.0%
7 months - 1year	25	7.1%
2 - 5 years	132	37.7%
6 - 10 years	107	30.6%
more than 10 years	58	16.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Most youths, 37.7 percent have been liming on the bloc between “2 – 5 years” (**Table 1.15**). A significant number, 30.6 percent have been liming there between “6 – 10 years” while 16.6 percent have been hanging out for “*more than 10 years*”.

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**Table 1.16**

<b>Youths by how often do you meet</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
nightly	299	85.4%
weekly	50	14.3%
monthly	1	0.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 9



**Table 1.16** indicates that a significantly large number of the youths hang out “*nightly*” on the bloc. Only 14.3 percent do their thing on a “*weekly*” basis.

**Table 1.17**

<b>Youths by 5 main things which happens on the bloc</b>
smoke marijuana
drink alcohol
play games
cook
argue and fight

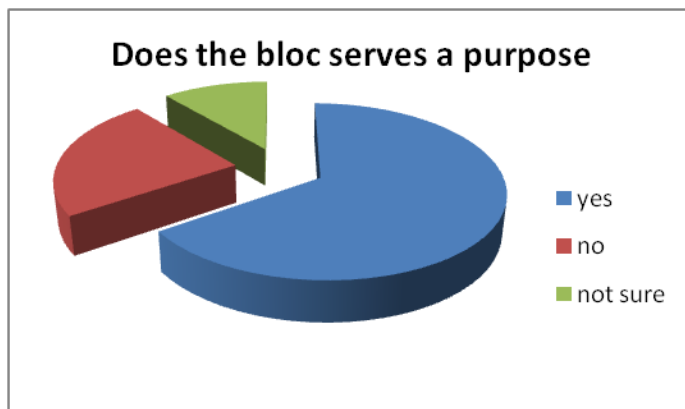
The question was asked of the youths, describe five main things which happen on the bloc. Quite a number of activities were revealed by the youths, but the main ones were (1) *smoke marijuana* (2) *drink alcohol* (3) *play games* (4) *cook* (5) *argue and fight* as can be seen in **Table 1.17**.

Apart from the main activities, the next five main happenings on the bloc that are worth mentioning include: *gambling, giving jokes, discuss issues, play and listen to music and tease girls. Just chilling, selling drugs and talking politics were additional activities happening on the bloc.*

**Table 1.18**

<b>Youths by do you think the bloc serves a purpose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
yes	229	65.4%
no	82	23.4%
not sure	39	11.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 10



Just over 65 percent of the youths are of the opinion that the bloc, where most of them spend a lot of their time, actually serves a purpose (**Table 1.18**). On the other hand, 23.4 percent do not agree and emphatically said “no” which is interesting considering that they are choosing to

“lime” there but at the same time feel that the bloc does not serve a purpose. Another 11.2 percent were “*not sure*”.

**Table 1.19**

<b>Youths who think the bloc does "not" serve a purpose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
has nothing good to offer	19	23.2%
it harbours violence	21	25.6%
it promotes laziness	14	17.1%
nothing positive happens there	13	15.8%
you can get into trouble there	15	18.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As was described in Table 1.17, 23.4 percent of the youths who were interviewed believe that the bloc does not serve a purpose. The reasons given are shown in **Table 1.19**. Among the negatives are: the bloc “*has nothing good to offer*”, “*it harbours violence*”, “*it promotes laziness*”, “*nothing positive happens there*” and “*you can get into trouble there*”.

**Table 1.20**

<b>Youths who think the bloc does serve a purpose</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
a place to chill and hang out	26	11.4%
a place to relax	28	12.2%
helps to keep us together and interact	50	21.8%
it releases stress	28	12.2%
keeps us out of trouble	26	11.4%
share problems with friends	29	12.7%
we socialize	25	10.9%
you learn new things about life	17	7.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Some very interesting reasons were given by those youths who thought that the bloc does serve a purpose (**Table 1.20**). These include: “*a place to chill and hang out*”, “*it helps to keep us together and interact*”, “*it releases stress*” and “*you share problems with friends*”.

Other purposes the bloc is believed to serve are “*it keeps us out of trouble*”, “*a place to relax*”, “*we socialize there*” and “*you learn new things about life*”.

**Table 1.21**

<b>Youths by do you see the bloc grouping helping your community</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
helps to create peace	15	4.3%
keeps the youth together	33	9.4%
like a neighbourhood watch	19	5.4%
we clean/beautify where we hang	26	7.4%
creates a sense of togetherness	25	7.1%
controls the level of violence	16	4.6%
helps to build relationships	20	5.7%
keeps us out of trouble	18	5.1%
not helping	122	34.9%
other	56	16.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

How do you see the bloc grouping helping your community? This the question put to the youths on the bloc. A very sizeable number of the youths (34.9 percent) were of the opinion that the bloc grouping was “*not helping*” the community (**Table 1.21**).

Those who expressed their beliefs that the bloc was helping the community thought that “*it keeps the youth together*”, “*the group clean and beautify where they hang out*”, “*the bloc creates a sense of togetherness*”, “*the bloc is like a neighbourhood watch*” and “*it helps to build relationships among the youths*”.

**Table 1.22**

<b>Youths by how would you describe your intimate relationship</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
not so good	12	3.4%
good	122	34.9%
very good	54	15.4%
good and loving	16	4.6%
could be better	19	5.4%
break up to make up	14	4.0%
sometimes good sometimes bad	12	3.4%
no relationship	101	28.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Intimate relationships play a central role in the overall human experience. Humans have a universal need to belong which is satisfied when intimate relationships are formed. Intimate relationships provide people with a social network of people that provide strong emotional attachments and fulfill our universal needs of belongingness and the need to be cared for.

Based on the data in **Table 1.22**, 28.9 percent of the participating youths “*did not have an intimate relationship*”. However, almost 40 percent described their intimate relationship as “*good*” and 15.4 percent were sure their relationship was “*very good*”. The intimate relationship for some other youths was not as exciting as they described it as “*not so good*”, “*could be better*”, “*break up to make up*” and “*sometimes good, sometimes bad*”.

**Table 1.23**

Youths by how do you think people should relate to each other when in an intimate relationship	Total	Percent
trust each other	60	17.1%
share love	28	8.0%
have love & understanding	34	9.7%
have respect for each other	36	10.3%
have good communication	47	13.4%
be honest and faithful	47	13.4%
no cheating	18	5.1%
be supportive of each other	13	3.8%
be romantic without violence	21	6.0%
other	46	13.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Interpersonal trust is an essential aspect of healthy human relationships. Placing one’s confidence in another person promotes many effective interactions especially between lovers.

In response to how people should relate to each other when in an intimate relationship, quite a number of suggestions were made (**Table 1.23**). These include: “*trust each other*”, “*have good communication*”, “*be honest and faithful*”, “*have respect for each other*”, “*have love and understanding*” and “*share love*”.

**Table 1.24**

Youths by have you experienced violence in a relationship as victim or perpetrator	Total	Percent
yes	60	17.1%
no	290	82.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 11



Violence in a relationship refers to physical or psychological violence by a male or female towards his or her partner. It has been established that women in most cases are the victims and the men are the perpetrators.

Men use violence against women, because (a) they have learned this behavior in their family of origin (have witnessed the father assault the mother); (b) they try to maintain a tough macho image reinforced by society and the media; (c) they believe it is an expression of male power and control; (d) they have low esteem and want their partner to remain dependent on them.

Being a victim of violence can include one or more of the following: physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. **Table 1.24** shows that only 17.1 percent of the youths who were surveyed experienced violence as a victim or perpetrator in their relationship. Of this 17.1 percent or sixty (60) participants, eleven (11) or 18.3 percent were women who turned out to be the perpetrator and physically abused their partner because; *“he cheated, I stabbed him”*, *“he went through my phone so I hit him on the head with a bottle”*, and *“he didn’t sleep at home, I threw hot water on him”*. Some of the male victims reported; *“my girlfriend beat me up”* and *“my girlfriend chopped me”*.

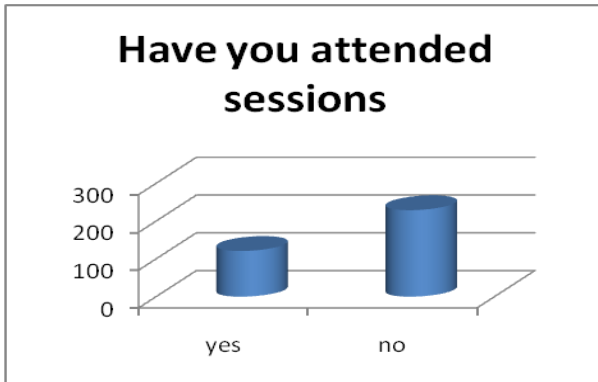
As indicated earlier the men, forty-nine (49) or 81.7 of the perpetrators were the more aggressive abusers in the relationships and their expressions of the type of physical abuse were not dissimilar. They spoke about: *“she was jealous, I beat her up”*, *“she cheated on me, I slapped her”*, *“she made me jealous, I beat her up”*, *“we had a fight, she got chopped”* and *“I was drunk, I broke her arm”*.

.....

**Table 1.25**

<b>Youths by have you attended sessions about Sexual &amp; Rep Health or HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
yes	121	34.6%
no	229	65.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 12



The youths were asked if they had ever attended any sessions about Sexual and Reproductive Health or HIV/AIDS. The majority, 65.4 percent did not attend any sessions, **Table 1.25**.

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**Table 1.26**

<b>Youths by what type of sessions</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
HIV/AIDS	65	53.7%
Sexual & Reproductive Health	56	46.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

For those youths who said they did attend sessions, 53.7 percent attended HIV/AIDS sessions while the remaining 46.3 percent attended Sexual and Reproductive Health sessions **(Table 1.26)**.

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**Table 1.27**

<b>Youths by do you have a sexual partner</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
yes	239	68.3%
no	111	31.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 13



**Table 1.28**

<b>Youths by Number of Sexual Partners</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
One sexual partner	162	67.8%
Two sexual partners	42	17.6%
Three sexual partners	26	10.9%
Four sexual partners	2	0.8%
Five sexual partners	6	2.5%
Six sexual partners	1	0.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Sexual activity among youth can bring with it serious consequences. In a world radically changed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, many youths nevertheless choose to initiate sexual intercourse.

**Table 1.27** indicates that the majority of youths on the bloc, 68.3 percent responded in the affirmative when asked if they had a sexual partner often with inconsistent use of contraceptives, including condoms and Table 1.28 reveals in detail the varying numbers of sexual partners.

According to **Table 1.28**, 67.8 percent of those who had a sexual partner stated that they had only one partner while just 17.6 percent had two sexual partners. In addition, 10.9 percent admitted they had three sexual partners and smaller numbers of youth had more than three partners.



**Table 1.29**

<b>Youths by do you or your partner use condoms every time you have sex</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
yes	122	51.0%
no	117	48.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

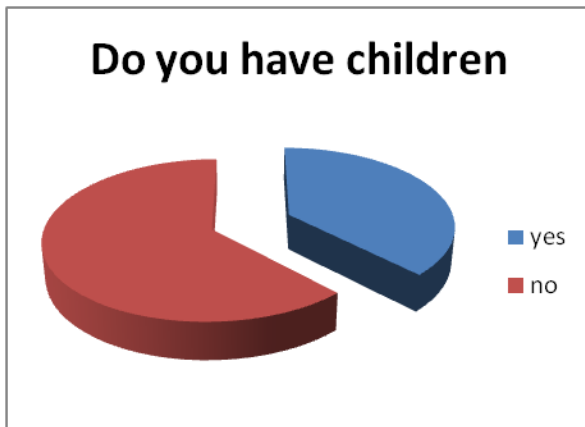
Decisions by the youth whether to have sex and whether to protect themselves from pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), are influenced by many factors. These include having a supportive family and adequate employment, residing in a rural or urban area, school performance, having access to accurate information and services on sexual and reproductive health and believing parents care and hold high expectations for their children. Youths have little control over most of these factors.

The youths with a sexual partner were asked if they themselves or their partner use condoms every time they have sex (**Table 1.29**). Responses here were almost even, just over 51 percent answered “yes” while the remaining 48.9 percent responded negatively.

**Table 1.30**

<b>Youths by do you have children</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
yes	132	37.7%
no	218	62.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart 14



When asked, do you have children? Almost two-thirds, 62.3 percent of the youths stated that they did not have any children compared to the remaining 37.7 percent who said “yes”, **Table 1.30**.

In concluding the interviews, the youths were asked: what other issues were discussed on the bloc? Other issues discussed included, politics, unemployment, sports, women, how to make money, police brutality, movies, sex and the economy.

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Several questions from the survey instrument were selected to be analyzed from the community standpoint to identify any similarities or differences regarding the composition of the blocs.

<b>Bloc: Table 1</b>	<b>Bloc by Sex</b>		
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrouallie	3	14	17
Bequia	-	17	17
Byera	4	12	16
Calliaqua	5	11	16
Campden Park	1	16	17
Carrierre	1	16	17
Chapmans	1	15	16
Georgetown	3	14	17
Green Hill	1	15	16
Greggs	3	14	17
Lauders	-	16	16
Lodge Village	4	13	17
Ottley Hall	2	15	17
Park Hill	-	17	17
Redemption Sharpes	3	14	17
Richland Park	2	14	16
Rose Bank	2	15	17
Rose Hall	-	17	17
Sandy Bay	-	17	17
Roseau	5	12	17
Union Island	2	14	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>350</b>

**Bloc: Table 1** shows the breakdown in the communities where the bloc groupings were interviewed. The data reveals that there were male participants only on the blocs in **Bequia, Lauders, Rose Hall** and **Sandy Bay**. There was a lone female in the groups hanging out in **Campden Park, Carrierre, Chapmans** and **Green Hill**.

The communities of **Calliaqua** and **Roseau** had the largest number of females liming or hanging out on the bloc.

<b>Bloc: Table 2</b>	<b>Bloc by Age Group</b>					
	<b>10-15</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>21-24</b>	<b>25-30</b>	<b>Over 30</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrouallie	1	5	4	3	4	17
Bequia	-	4	3	3	7	17
Byera	1	1	2	8	4	16
Calliaqua	-	3	7	3	3	16
Campden Park	-	5	2	7	3	17
Carrierre	2	5	4	2	4	17
Chapmans	2	5	3	2	4	16
Georgetown	1	6	7	1	2	17
Green Hill	1	5	5	5	-	16
Greggs	-	4	5	5	3	17
Lauders	-	3	2	4	7	16
Lodge Village	-	5	4	5	3	17
Ottley Hall	1	9	6	1	-	17
Park Hill	2	6	-	3	6	17
Redemption Sharpes	-	4	-	-	13	17
Richland Park	-	5	4	5	2	16
Rose Bank	-	1	6	5	5	17
Rose Hall	-	1	2	8	6	17
Sandy Bay	3	4	4	1	5	17
Roseau	-	3	7	6	1	17
Union Island	-	11	3	2	-	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>350</b>

In the community of **Redemption Sharpes**, the majority of those who hang out on the bloc are over the age of thirty years (**Bloc: Table 2**). However, in **Green Hill, Ottley Hall** and **Union Island**, no one over the age of thirty years lime on the bloc and as a matter of fact in Union Island most of the group there belong to the age group 16 – 20 years.

Several communities had no one within the 10 – 15 age group on the bloc.

<b>Bloc: Table 3</b>	<b>Bloc by what are you doing now</b>				
	<b>Other</b>	<b>Studying</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Working</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrouallie	-	2	6	9	17
Bequia	-	-	3	<b>14</b>	17
Byera	-	-	<b>9</b>	7	16
Calliaqua	-	2	3	11	16
Campden Park	-	1	3	13	17
Carrierre	-	2	4	11	17
Chapmans	-	5	1	10	16
Georgetown	-	3	6	8	17
Green Hill	-	2	<b>9</b>	5	16
Greggs	1	1	5	10	17
Lauders	-	1	4	11	16
Lodge Village	-	1	5	11	17
Ottley Hall	-	-	<b>13</b>	4	17
Park Hill	-	3	6	8	17
Redemption Sharpes	-	2	6	9	17
Richland Park	-	1	5	10	16
Rose Bank	-	-	3	<b>14</b>	17
Rose Hall	-	1	6	10	17
Sandy Bay	-	5	5	7	17
Roseau	-	-	<b>12</b>	5	17
Union Island	-	1	<b>9</b>	6	16
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>350</b>

It has been established earlier that 55 percent of the total surveyed youth population were employed at the time of the interviews. At the bloc group level, **Bequia** and **Rose Bank** account for the highest numbers who were actively employed with most of the employed belonging to the 25 – 30 and the 30 years and over age group.

Overall, there was also a relatively high 35 percent who were unemployed. The unemployed among the surveyed youth were more evident in the communities of **Byera**, **Green Hill**, **Ottley Hall**, **Roseau** and **Union Island**. The highest numbers of the unemployed are in **Ottley Hall** (76 percent of those interviewed) where 88 percent of interviewed youth on that bloc are under the age of 25 years as can be seen in **Bloc: Table 3**.

The communities of **Chapmans** and **Sandy Bay** had the most youths who were still attending school.

<b>Bloc: Table 4</b>	<b>Bloc by do you live alone</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrouallie	14	3	17
Bequia	15	2	17
Byera	10	6	16
Calliaqua	14	2	16
Campden Park	16	1	17
Carrierre	15	2	17
Chapmans	11	5	16
Georgetown	17	-	17
Green Hill	12	4	16
Greggs	12	5	17
Lauders	13	3	16
Lodge Village	13	4	17
Ottley Hall	14	3	17
Park Hill	15	2	17
Redemption Sharpes	14	3	17
Richland Park	14	2	16
Rose Bank	16	1	17
Rose Hall	17	-	17
Sandy Bay	17	-	17
Roseau	16	1	17
Union Island	12	4	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>350</b>

**Bloc: Table 4** indicates that none of the youths who participated in the survey in the communities of **Georgetown, Rose Hall** and **Sandy Bay** live by themselves. The community of **Byera** had the highest number living alone followed by **Chapmans** and **Greggs**.

<b>Bloc: Table 5</b>	<b>Bloc by with whom do you live</b>						
	<b>Boyfriend</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>Friends</b>	<b>Girlfriend</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Live alone</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrouallie	1	11	-	2	-	3	17
Bequia	-	12	-	3	-	2	17
Byera	-	9	-	1	-	6	16
Calliaqua	3	7	2	2	-	2	16
Campden Park	-	12	-	3	1	1	17
Carrierre	-	14	-	1	-	2	17
Chapmans	-	10	-	1	-	5	16
Georgetown	-	16	1	-	-	-	17
Green Hill	-	5	3	3	1	4	16
Greggs	1	11	-	-	-	5	17
Lauders	-	8	-	4	1	3	16
Lodge Village	1	9	-	3	-	4	17
Ottley Hall	1	9	1	-	3	3	17
Park Hill	-	13	-	2	-	2	17
Redemption Sharpes	-	8	-	4	2	3	17
Richland Park	-	12	-	2	-	2	16
Rose Bank	-	14	-	2	-	1	17
Rose Hall	-	11	-	6	-	-	17
Sandy Bay	-	12	3	2	-	-	17
Roseau	1	14	-	1	-	1	17
Union Island	-	11	-	1	-	4	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>350</b>

Most of the youths in each community are still living with their family, that is, parents and grand parents. However **Green Hill** has the lowest number still living with family while the grouping in **Georgetown** had the highest number.

Almost half of all male grouping on the bloc in **Rose Hall** (where 82 percent of the respondents were over the age of 25 years) had a relationship and were living with their girlfriends and **Calliaqua** had the most females living with their boyfriends (**Bloc: Table 5**).

<b>Bloc: Table 6</b>	<b>Bloc by income of person you live with</b>					<b>Total</b>
	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Barely Manageable</b>	<b>Manageable</b>	<b>Too Little</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	
Barrouallie	1	1	11	4	-	17
Bequia	1	7	7	2	-	17
Byera	-	12	2	2	-	16
Calliaqua	2	2	7	1	4	16
Campden Park	5	1	8	3	-	17
Carrierre	1	4	5	4	3	17
Chapmans	1	4	10	1	-	16
Georgetown	1	7	8	1	-	17
Green Hill	2	5	6	3	-	16
Greggs	1	7	5	4	-	17
Lauders	1	5	5	5	-	16
Lodge Village	-	4	3	5	5	17
Ottley Hall	-	5	3	8	1	17
Park Hill	1	-	11	2	3	17
Redemption Sharpes	-	1	5	4	7	17
Richland Park	3	2	8	-	3	16
Rose Bank	-	5	11	1	-	17
Rose Hall	-	4	13	-	-	17
Sandy Bay	2	3	5	2	5	17
Roseau	-	10	3	4	-	17
Union Island	2	3	6	2	3	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>350</b>

Most of the youths in **Barrouallie, Chapmans, Park Hill, Rose Bank** and **Rose Hall** thought that the income of the persons they live with was “*manageable*” with the **Rose Hall** grouping having the highest number who expressed those views.

In the community of **Ottley Hall** just over half of the youths stated that the income was “*too little*” while the majority of the youths in **Byera** and **Roseau** described the income of the persons they live with as “*barely manageable*”.



<b>Bloc: Table 7</b>	<b>Bloc by violence in relationship</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrouallie	12	5	17
Bequia	13	4	17
Byera	14	2	16
Calliaqua	15	1	16
Campden Park	11	6	17
Carrierre	14	3	17
Chapmans	16	-	16
Georgetown	16	1	17
Green Hill	13	3	16
Greggs	13	4	17
Lauders	16	-	16
Lodge Village	15	2	17
Ottley Hall	13	4	17
Park Hill	16	1	17
Redemption Sharpes	14	3	17
Richland Park	13	3	16
Rose Bank	13	4	17
Rose Hall	14	3	17
Sandy Bay	17	-	17
Roseau	7	10	17
Union Island	15	1	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>350</b>

The community of **Roseau** stands out with regards to experiencing violence in a relationship either as a victim or as a perpetrator. In this community, 76 percent of the respondents are between age 21 and 30. Almost 60 percent of those who responded have experienced violence in their relationships in one form or the other. The community of **Campden Park** followed next with just over 35 percent having said they experienced violence.

The youths on the bloc in **Chapmans**, **Lauders** and **Sandy Bay** had no experience of violence and the numbers in **Calliaqua**, **Georgetown**, **Park Hill** and **Union Island** were negligible.

<b>Bloc: Table 8</b>	<b>Bloc by do you have a sexual partner</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrouallie	3	14	17
Bequia	5	12	17
Byera	5	11	16
Calliaqua	7	9	16
Campden Park	1	16	17
Carrierre	5	12	17
Chapmans	12	4	16
Georgetown	11	6	17
Green Hill	3	13	16
Greggs	5	12	17
Lauders	2	14	16
Lodge Village	6	11	17
Ottley Hall	8	9	17
Park Hill	10	7	17
Redemption Sharpes	7	10	17
Richland Park	2	14	16
Rose Bank	3	14	17
Rose Hall	3	14	17
Sandy Bay	10	7	17
Roseau	2	15	17
Union Island	1	15	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>350</b>

There were four communities in which more youths indicated “no” they did not have a sexual partner. These communities are **Chapmans, Georgetown, Park Hill** and **Sandy Bay**.

Apart from one youth in **Union Island**, everyone else had a sexual partner. However, 43.7 percent of these respondents had more than one sexual partners.

<b>Bloc: Table 9</b>	<b>Bloc by Condom Use</b>			
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No Sexual Partner</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barrouallie	5	9	3	17
Bequia	7	5	5	17
Byera	9	2	5	16
Calliaqua	-	9	7	16
Campden Park	9	7	1	17
Carrierre	3	9	5	17
Chapmans	3	1	12	16
Georgetown	5	1	11	17
Green Hill	7	6	3	16
Greggs	6	6	5	17
Lauders	5	9	2	16
Lodge Village	2	9	6	17
Ottley Hall	7	2	8	17
Park Hill	7	-	10	17
Redemption Sharpes	7	3	7	17
Richland Park	5	9	2	16
Rose Bank	8	6	3	17
Rose Hall	5	9	3	17
Sandy Bay	1	6	10	17
Sion Hill	7	8	2	17
Union Island	9	6	1	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>350</b>

The youths in each community were asked to respond to the question; Do you or your partner use condoms every time you have sex?

In **Calliaqua**, all the youths who said they had a sexual partner answered in the affirmative compared to all of those in **Park Hill** who said “no”. The majority of youths in several other communities also said “no” meaning they do not use condoms every time they have sex. These communities are **Bequia, Byera, Campden Park, Ottley Hall, Rose Bank** and **Union Island**.

## **ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

### Introduction

Three focus group discussions were conducted in the selected communities of Ottley Hall, Redemption Sharpes and Green Hill. On average there were between twelve to fifteen participants in each group and there were three female participants in only one community group, Redemption Sharpes. The women here were very vocal, in a lot of ways they challenged some of the opinions expressed by the men without actually expressing their own feelings. The heated discussions had to be managed so as not to digress too far away from the main discussion topic.

All sessions went extremely well with high levels of discussion among the enthusiastic youths. Because of the intensity of the contributions, all of the discussions went beyond one and a half hours.

Responses to the questions are given below.

### **1. What are your impressions about young men? Your impressions about young women?**

Generally all groups were of the opinion that the “young men” of today get themselves involved in too much violence and illegal activities. The groups believe that these young men are in the minority but whatever they do becomes sensational and creates headlines. The impressions of the “young men” are that:

- they are lazy
- they are involved in illegal activities
- most are disrespectful to women
- some are timewasters and are going down the wrong path
- they are scrunters and should be weeded out of society
- some do not like to help another and are jealous of other men
- too many engage themselves in violence

The groups indicated that “young women” are also engaged in illegal activities and there is the need for them to uplift themselves. Other opinions expressed include:

- they love and talk too much commess (gossiping)
- they feel men want them for their body only
- most of them degrade themselves and are very unfaithful
- some have a negative attitude towards men
- some young women are also involved in illegal activities

## **2. What do you think are the problems facing young men today? Young women today?**

The groups were very passionate when they revealed the way they were being treated by the police. Accordingly, repeated harassment by the police is a major problem the “young men” have to endure. As a result of all the problems they face, some youths have no choice but to resort to smoking marijuana, get caught up in criminal activities and violence.

Other problems are:

- have to depend too much on parents
- a feeling of neglect by the authorities
- lack of sporting facilities
- no positive responses to job applications
- lack of money

Some problems young women are facing are not dissimilar to those of the young men, they include:

- they are being abused by men
- have to depend too much on parents
- some women resort to gambling
- because of hardships, they turn to prostitution
- no positive responses to job applications

## **3. What kinds of programmes do you think would help the youth? For young men? For young women?**

Most youths, both men and women, were of the opinion that programmes that can assist the youth with employment opportunities would help greatly.

- sporting activities programmes
- trade and technical skills development
- more youth cultured programmes
- skills training facilities
- work and employment opportunities

#### **4. When you think about your future what do you see yourself doing?**

In response to this question, there was only one isolated negative reply. The majority of the youths were seriously planning to develop themselves for the future.

- have my own house, settle down with my family
- get into some kind of business
- being a professional – a lawyer, an artist, an ambassador
- sailing on a cruise ship
- go overseas to study
- get involved in construction
- set up my own business and provide employment to others

#### **5. How do you deal with problems when they arise?**

Problem solving appeared to be a difficult area for the youths to deal with in the discussions. The issue of confrontation raised its ugly head among some participants while quiet resolution for problem solving was mentioned by some.

- try to ignore and walk away
- an eye for an eye confrontation
- I meditate and become socially exclusive
- depending on how serious the problem is, I would leave the country
- trash them out and try to resolve through communication

#### **6. What is life like in your community for young men, young women?**

The general feeling was that life is difficult for both sexes in the community.

- life is extremely hard
- life is a struggle
- young men suffer because there are no jobs for them
- most people tend to be negative towards the youth
- there are constant threats from the police with some youths experiencing police brutality
- there is a stigma attached to young men, especially those on the bloc
- young women seem to have more parental support
- young women are being pressured by older men to have relationships

### **7. How should a man behave? What does being a man mean to you?**

With regards to how men should behave, these were the responses:

- men should not hold grudges
- men are supposed to show maturity in their behavior
- men should exhibit self control
- being a man means that you have too many responsibilities
- being a man means being independent
- being a man means having a family and be secured
- being a man means that you are able to deal with conflict resolutions

### **8. How should a woman behave? What does being a woman mean to you?**

Women participated in only one of the focus group discussions; however the young men also had their views regarding how women should behave.

- she should be hygienic at all times
- she should be respectful at home and away from home
- she should exhibit levels of decency and self discipline
- being a woman means she should have kids and take care of them
- being a woman means having a good education, a good job and be independent

### **9. How do men and women deal with their sexuality in your community?**

The following views on sexuality were expressed during the discussion.

- homosexuality is clearly revealed in the community
- the women show a lack of decency, they expose themselves anywhere
- the way women dress, they reveal too much of their body

### **10. What do you see as the biggest challenge/concern facing youth in your community?**

This discussion triggered wide ranging reactions from all focus groups. The challenges were basically the same in the communities where the discussions took place.

- poverty
- drugs – smoking and selling
- lack of employment
- too many youths are idle in the community
- the frequency of gang wars
- lack of money
- the youths being judged negatively by society

### **11. What family support do you have to achieve your goals?**

Strong family relationships with the youth do lead to positive changes in their lives. These changes tend to occur indirectly as a result of the close and trusting relationship.

There were mixed reactions from the youth regarding family support and the achievement of goals.

- no support from the family
- some parents have a negative attitude towards their kids (the youths)
- no support, the family are overseas
- financial support from parents
- emotional support and advice from parents

### **12. What are your impressions about families in your community?**

- some gossip too much and mind other people's business
- some are against the youth on the bloc
- they call the police for every little thing
- some poor families really struggle
- some families are evil while others are very nice

### **13. What are the things you like about living in your community?**

- usually there are sporting activities in the community
- the community is very quiet during the day
- it has lots of natural resources
- a variety of fruits and vegetables are readily available
- it is within close proximity of the town
- it has nice looking girls

### **14. What steps would you like to take to help you reach your goals?**

- to get training in a specific field and develop a skill
- try to start my own business
- to find a job and be financially secure
- to finish my education up to tertiary level



**15. Are there youth friendly spaces where you and your friends can go to have discussions and have other activities?**

- community centres
- the Botanical Gardens
- on the bloc

**16. What services/programmes are available for out of school, hard to reach, vulnerable youths in the community?**

- no such services/programmes exist
- only the 4H programmes

## CONCLUSIONS

Liming, chilling or simply hanging out on the bloc appears to be a way of life for a significant number of the youth population in all the communities here St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Among the many concerns regarding the bloc culture however is the given description of the main activities that take place there. Certainly the smoking of marijuana, the drinking of alcohol and persistent arguments and fights are activities that should be discouraged or drastically reduced especially when most of these youths gather together on a nightly basis. Whereas it would be difficult to eliminate the bloc culture there needs to be some intervening measures to create a better image on the bloc.

Again, getting rid of the stigma attached to the bloc is of vital importance to those who hang out there. This is so because just about two-thirds of the participants in the survey conclude that the bloc does serve a purpose. According to the youth, the bloc environment is somewhere where they can relax, release stress, share problems with friends and more. Those youths where the home environment is stressful at times and where there is poor communication would obviously see the need to chill on the bloc.

Youth sexuality is also a cause for concern and some attention needs to be paid there. Of the participating youths over sixty-percent never attended a session on Sexual and Reproductive Health or HIV/AIDS but just about the same number already have a sexual partner. However, half of those who already have a sexual partner (in some cases more than one) do not use a condom every time they have sex. The implications therefore are tremendous; unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections all come into the equation.

With regards to the focus group discussions, the participating youths are of the opinion that most young people still depend on their parents for everything. They believe that young people are being neglected by the authorities especially as they receive negative responses to most of their job applications.

They young people are also of the view that sporting programmes, training facilities and employment opportunity programmes will help their cause tremendously. With regards to the future, the majority of the youth are thinking positively. They would like to further their studies or get into some sort of business and eventually settle down with a family.

The youth believe it is imperative that men and women exhibit high levels of decency and self control and that both sexes should be matured in their behavior.

Some of the biggest challenges in the communities where the youth live are the drug problem, lack of employment which has led to poverty and the emerging gang warfare among the youth. They think that for them, life in the community is hard and it is a struggle because most people are very negative toward the youth.

To conclude, the development of the youth requires a focus on young people's capacities, strengths and development needs as well as their problems. Strategies should be implemented that can increase youths connections to positive, supportive relationships on or off the bloc and challenging, meaningful experiences. The youth who spend so much time liming on the bloc deserve access to a wide range of services, supports and opportunities.

**Appendix 1**

**YOUTH AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

**MINISTRY OF NATION MOBILISATION**

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT YOUTH AND SPORTS**

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME ( BLOC)**

**Questionnaire**

1. Name of community.....
2. Group: .....
3. Home Address: .....
4. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
5. Age Range 10-15 [ ] 16- 20 [ ] 21- 24 [ ] 25 – 30 [ ] over 30yrs [ ]

**Educational Attainment and Employment**

6. What educational institution did you last attend? .....
7. Grade/form attained: .....
8. What educational institution are you attending now? .....
9. Grade /Form: .....
10. What are you doing now? Studying [ ] working [ ] unemployed [ ] other [ ]
11. Do you have any special skill or training [ ] yes (continue) [ ] no (go to Q14)
12. If Yes, Please indicate: Technical [ ] (please give examples)  
Vocation [ ] (please give examples)  
Other [ ] please specify .....
13. Where was the training done? .....



26. Do you think the bloc serves a purpose? Yes [ ] No [ ] Not sure [ ]
27. State reasons for your answer.....
28. How many other blocs exist in your village/area? .....
29. What are the names (if any)? .....
30. How do you see the bloc grouping helping your community?  
.....

**Intimate Relationships**

31. How would you describe your intimate relationship(s)?  
.....  
.....

32. How you do you think people should relate to each other when in an intimate relationship?  
.....  
.....

33. Have you ever experienced violence in a relationship(s) either as a victim or as a perpetrator or both?  
Yes [ ] No [ ] (go to Q35)

34. If yes, please describe the situation or situations.  
.....  
.....

35. Have you ever attended any sessions about Sexual and Reproductive Health or HIV/AIDS?  
Yes [ ] No [ ] (Go to Q37)

36. If yes, what type of sessions?  
.....

37. Do you have a sexual partner(s)? Yes [ ] No [ ] (go to Q41)

38. If yes, how many? .....

39. Do you or your partner use condoms every time you have sex?  
Yes [ ] (go to Q41)      No [ ]

40. If no, how often? .....

41. Do you have any children?

42. Do you discuss these issues while on the block?  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

43. What other issues are discussed on the bloc?

.....  
.....

We also invite you to participate in a focus group discussion with others. Refreshments will be provided. Are you interested? (If respondent is interested please ask for contact information for follow-up).

.....  
.....  
.....

***Thank you very much for your time.***

## Appendix 11

### Questions for Focus Group Discussions

1. What are your impressions about today's Youth? Your impressions about young men? Your impressions about young women?
2. What do you think are the problems facing Youth today? Problems facing young men? Problems facing young women?
3. What kinds of programmes do you think would help the Youth? For young men? For young women?
4. When you think about your future, what do you see yourself doing?
5. How do you deal with problems when they arise?
6. What is life like for Youth in your community for young men and young women?
7. How should a man behave? What does being a man mean to you?
8. How should a woman behave? What does being a woman mean to you?
9. How do you think youth deal with their sexuality in your community? How do men deal with their sexuality? How do women deal with their sexuality?
10. What do you see as the biggest challenge/concern facing Youth in your community?
11. What kind of support (family church/religious services, school, friends) do you have to achieve your goals?
12. What are your impressions about families in your community?
13. What are the things you like about living in your community?
14. What steps would you like to take to help you reach your future goals?
15. Are there youth friendly spaces where you and your friends can go to have discussions and have other activities? If so, describe what makes them youth-friendly? If not, what do you expect a youth friendly space should offer, for example, job training, counseling, health services and other?
16. What services/programmes are available for out-of-school, hard to reach/vulnerable youth in the country? What services/programmes do you think are needed?