Rapid assessment of child labour in Saint Lucia
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Foreword

Saint Lucia’s recent accession to and participation in the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour, is a significant and meaningful step which reflects the will and intent of yet another Caribbean Government to address the worrisome and negative social trends that have been observed in its national context. The Government of Saint Lucia has committed to pursuing a strategy that values research, re-engineering and targeted social action, and in that regard, the ILO and Government of Brazil, through the ILO-Brazil South-South Cooperation Programme welcomed the opportunity to provide technical assistance for the conduct a Rapid Assessment on Child Labour in Saint Lucia, as a first and crucial step in understanding and addressing the issue.

The Report presents encouraging results, witnessing an overall low incidence of child labour. However, we must remain cognizant of the need to pay attention to the several areas of weakness and potential risks that have been highlighted. The work to be done will require the concerted efforts and contributions not just of the Government, but also of civil society stakeholders, workers’ and employers’ organizations, and individual citizens throughout the country.

The ILO looks forward to continuing its collaboration with Saint Lucia and the other Caribbean member States of the Regional Initiative, to implement actions focused on proactive prevention of child labour and its worst forms, and toward achieving the goals set by SDG 8.7 for the complete elimination of all forms of child labour by 2025.

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July 2017
Acknowledgements

This Rapid Assessment is part of a South-South Cooperation initiative funded through the Brazil-ILO Cooperation Programme, within the context of the International Labour Organization’s Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour (RI). The assessment was undertaken with the active collaboration of the Government of Saint Lucia, and in particular, with the Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour.

The Rapid Assessment was conducted by Alessandro Conticini under the supervision of Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Specialist, and Resel Melville, RI National Project Coordinator, both of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean.

Several professionals, Government officials, social workers, NGO’s professionals, inspectors, and teachers have dedicated time and effort, providing data, sharing knowledge and allowing the research to gain access to informants for the purpose of the Study. As it would be impossible to individually acknowledge each contributing informant, a full list of institutions and individuals participating in this assessment is provided in Annex 1. We wish to convey our deepest admiration for the work they are conducting in their daily fight for a better world.

Two people deserve a special mention for the support they have extended to this assessment. In particular, the researchers are indebted to Mr Ray Narcisse, Labour Commissioner, for coordinating our field work and visits in Saint Lucia, and for having lobbied for the collaboration with the ILO on this initiative. The researchers are also particularly grateful to Ms Cornelia Jn. Baptiste, Deputy Labour Commissioner and Child Labour Focal Point, for her invaluable contributions to all aspects of field research, setting meetings, organizing field trips, providing data, and identifying key informants and providing feedback on draft versions. This research would not have been possible without her time and full commitment to the cause of combating child labour and eradicating the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in Saint Lucia.

Finally, we would like to thank the several parents, children and young persons who made this research possible by sharing their views, opinions and experiences with the author. By providing their ideas on the priority actions to be established against child labour and the WFCL, they have expressed the firm hope that future interventions will be relevant to their socio-economic conditions, and tailor-made to their living situations.
Executive Summary

1. Saint Lucia is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). It is classified as an upper middle-income country. Tourism is Saint Lucia’s main source of revenue and the industry is the island’s biggest employer. In 2014 and 2015, on the back of strong tourism inflows and lower oil prices, the economy has returned to growth after experiencing a recession in 2012 and close-to-zero growth in 2013. Transportation and hotels were the sectors mostly contributing to the economic recovery. Despite moderate economic recovery, unemployment rose to 24.4 percent in 2014. Youth unemployment, in particular, reached 41.8 percent. The country is still confronted with a number of structural weaknesses and key bottlenecks, including low productivity and price competitiveness, despite the progress in the reform agenda.

2. Saint Lucia is a signatory country to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict; and the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. However, the Government has not yet ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

3. Saint Lucia’s Legislation applies several different and often contrasting age limits to the various definitions used for ‘child, minor, young person and youth’, creating significant obstacles and/or loopholes in the enforcement of laws relevant to child labour or worst forms of child labour (WFCL). Additionally, the Government does not have any coordination system or tripartite council in place that could effectively manage discussions and interventions around child labour, skills development, transition to work, or WFCL. The management of these different themes is still done on an ad hoc basis, despite the willingness of the Ministry of Labour to correct this shortfall. Based on the findings of this Rapid Assessment, law enforcement agents and social services should be key players, together with the Ministries of Labour and Education, in coordinating efforts to prevent WFCL.
4. Despite previous studies which have presented relatively high levels of child labour in Saint Lucia, rectifications to previous analyses and results, as well as direct observation did not confirm an important prevalence of child labour, but rather low levels of children engaging in economic activities and household chores for long hours per week. This is not to say that children in Saint Lucia are not exposed to the risk of child labour, but rather to point out that the practice of using children for economic activities outside or inside the household has significantly decreased since the collapsing of the banana trade. Children who are performing economic activities do so while respecting school attendance and within acceptable hours of work per week. Even the tourism sector, previously indicated as a well-known source of child labour recruitment, did not display significant problems during field observation and participants’ interviews.

5. Existing data on Saint Lucia suggested that boys are more exposed to the risk of child labour, especially for the younger cohort of 5 to 11 year olds, and yet this result has been challenged in subsequent re-analyses that found little gender difference in child labour in Saint Lucia. On the contrary, for the 12 to 14 year olds, a higher proportion of girls perform economic activities and household chores than boys. The rural/urban analysis did not highlight significant differences, partially due to the high mobility of people in the island between rural and urban environments.

6. The quantitative data presented mainly refers to the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) 2012, but the analyses of the findings of that Study were subsequently partially modified by authors on two occasions. Therefore, the statistics at hand should be used with caution and be considered an indication of patterns and trends worth further investigation.

7. The wealth analysis showed a negative correlation between the wealth percentage of the household, and the rate of child labour. This is fully compatible with primary data collection which showed economically (and socially) marginalized households to be at greater risk of child labour. The child well-being rate (which incorporated the propensity to child labour), highly decreases for households that are single-headed and that have a higher number of children (both elements directly correlated to increased poverty levels). The same can be said for the propensity for child labour vis-à-vis the low level of education of the mother. Summarizing, children aged 5–11 who are involved in child labour are more likely to be male (14 per cent), whose mother has no/primary level education (14 per cent), from the poorest households (18 per cent). Children aged 5–14 years who live in the poorest households are about three times more likely to be involved in child labour (12 per cent) than those from the richest households (4 per cent). Again, children aged 12–14 years who were involved in economic activities for less than 14 hours during the week preceding the survey, are more likely to be females (19 per cent), who live in the rural areas (17 per cent), whose mother has no/primary level education (24 per cent) and from the poorest households (27 per cent).  

8. There is a perception that schools do not play any meaningful protective role in the lives of many working children. On the contrary, they have been presented by informants to this assessment as places of recruitment into gangs, organised crime, or part-time voluntary prostitution. Teachers do not appear to be trained in addressing some of the emotional needs of children in the absence of supportive parents. Children and youth struggle to find positive

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role models inside the school or the community, resulting in them electing local gangs’ leaders as role models. The involvement of parents in school activities has also been reported as a main challenge for the majority of the schools. Many parents do not seem to be interested in following their children’s performance in school. On the other hand, teachers have been criticized for not being accommodating of the schedule constraints of single working parents, who are often unable to attend school meetings. Overall, teachers have also been criticized for excluding and suspending children with behavioural problems, as opposed to addressing those deviant behaviours in a more inclusive manner.

9. The official drop-out rate in primary school is 0.6 per cent compared to 1.6 per cent in secondary school, but independent studies raise the figures as high as 17 per cent. In primary school, on average for the past 10 years, a recorded 25 per cent higher propensity to drop-out has been recorded for boys than girls. Yet, in the past three years the drop-out rate for girls in primary school has significantly increased, reaching the same or a higher drop-out level of the boys. For secondary schools, the picture is not much different as the average drop-out rate for the past ten years varied from 2.4 per cent to 1.6 per cent. Boys have historically been 2.5 times more likely to drop out from school, but in recent years the drop-out rate for both sexes became more similar. Repetition levels in primary school increased in the recent ten years, passing from 2.1 to 2.8 per cent. More boys than girls repeat some aspect of their primary school education at the rate of 3.8 against 2.2 per cent. In some districts, the average repeaters rate is 4.6 per cent (District One), and in some schools, the repeaters rate is 14.5 per cent (Roblot Government School in District Seven).

10. The most significant finding for Saint Lucia is the extent and severity of WFCL found in ghettos and poor communities. Children have been found performing all sorts of “at-risk” activities, either voluntarily, instigated or forced by older siblings or adults (including parents and guardians). Prostitution, sale of children, sex slavery, use of children for drug trade, alcohol consumption, use of firearms and machetes, robbery and assaults, gambling and the like, have all been reported during this assessment by a large number of informants, including members of ghetto communities, youth, parents and teachers. The children are attracted to the alternative “kids-on-the-block” gang culture as a result of isolation, marginalization, despair, anger, lack of job options or opportunities, and very poor caretaking by parents. Social capital in communities has been eroded and traditional support mechanisms have been substituted with a semi-organized, gang culture of mutual support for boys and girls. Mainstream social values and beliefs stand in stark contrast to the ghetto community’s value system. “Barrel children” who did not find any positive role models or have meaningful adult supervision, have drifted towards gang leaders who provide protection, a feeling of belonging and empowerment.

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2 Government of Saint Lucia. Education Statistical Digest. Past trends, present position and projections. (Ministry of Education Department 2016.)
3 FHI 360 (2014). Saint Lucia National Education Profile. (Update 2014)
5 Ibid.
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## Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CANTA</td>
<td>Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
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<td>CDB</td>
<td>Caribbean Development Bank</td>
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<td>CL</td>
<td>Child Labour</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECLAC</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>IYF</td>
<td>International Youth Foundation</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey</td>
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<td>NSDC</td>
<td>National Skills Development Centre</td>
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<td>NTI</td>
<td>National Training Institutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCS</td>
<td>Occupational and Competency Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECS</td>
<td>Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States</td>
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<td>RI</td>
<td>Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour</td>
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<td>SSNP</td>
<td>Social Safety Net Programme</td>
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<td>SSP</td>
<td>Second Step Programme</td>
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<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>US Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WFCL</td>
<td>Worst Forms of Child Labour</td>
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<td>YEP</td>
<td>Youth Empowerment Project</td>
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Section One
Framing the Research

Background of the Rapid Assessment

The present undertaking is part of the activities financed under the framework of the Regional Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour (RI), an intergovernmental platform for cooperation with the active participation of employers’ and workers’ organizations. Twenty-five countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, including five Caribbean countries -- the Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago -- formed the Regional Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour in October 2014. The RI was mandated to “accelerate the pace in the prevention and eradication of child labour and its worst forms, through institutional cooperation within and among sectors, and among the various levels of government”. By signing, the countries also signaled their commitment to take action “in line with the overall goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016 and the regional goal [...] to eliminate all forms of child labour by 2020.” With the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the inclusion of Target 8.7, which calls, inter alia, to “put an end to child labour in all its forms by 2025”, the proposal of the Regional Initiative has been strengthened and consolidated, and the issue of Child Labour is no longer only a regional concern, but has been mainstreamed into the global agenda.

The Government of Brazil is supporting the Initiative with funds from its South–South Cooperation Programme. Specifically, the Programme’s aim is to share the Brazilian Government’s good practices and experiences in the areas of both child labour and school-to-work transition for youth, with Caribbean members of the Initiative. The Programme was agreed upon and developed with the goal of enabling the governments, and workers’ and employers’ organizations to develop capacity in these areas.

Within the above-mentioned framework, the present Study aims at analyzing the child labour situation in Saint Lucia, outlining existing measures and programmes that address the situation, while making suitable policy and programmatic recommendations. The Study provides a summary description of the main quantitative indicators available to characterize the young labourers, and highlights pull and push factors related to the phenomenon and to specific occupations. Root causes are investigated, together with historical trends, cultural mechanisms, and social dynamics according to data available. Impact and consequences are assessed, and some perceptions and experiences of child labourers presented before identifying and assessing selected Government, non-governmental organization (NGO) and international agency interventions.

Section One of the Study starts by presenting a short background with relevant definitions, international legal standards, and the methodological context. Section Two elaborates on the legal and policy environment of Saint Lucia when it comes to provisions relevant to child labour

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6 The RI was formalized in October 2014 with the signing of a Declaration by 25 Ministers of Labour in the Region. Of the 25 signatories, five were Caribbean: Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. In 2016, two more Caribbean states, Grenada and Saint Lucia, joined.
8 Ibid.
and WFCL. Section Two also presents applicable coordinating and data sharing mechanisms that allow for a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional collaboration between Government agencies, civil society organizations, and representatives from employers’ and workers’ federations.

Section Three presents the main findings of the Study by starting from an analysis of current knowledge concerning the extent and practices associated with child labour. Whenever possible, an age and gender analysis has been conducted to assess specificities of the phenomenon, as well as presentation of data by area of settlement (rural vs. urban), by wealth groups, and by focus on the school system (primary and secondary). Analysis on trends has been hard to capture due to the scarcity of comparable, quantitative data over a period of time. However, participating informants have provided their retrospective views on the evolution of child labour practices in their communities.

The WFCL have been considered in Section Four. Due to the limitations in the quantitative datasets available for this research component, the analysis presented is mainly based on primary and secondary qualitative information. This Section elaborates on the socio-economic environments that provide fertile ground for the recruitment of children into gangs and organized or un-organized crime. It also presents the views of the children and youth within the communities on the different protective or enabling factors that increase vulnerability to the WFCL.

While no current programme specifically designed to prevent child labour or the WFCL has been found in Saint Lucia, the assessment reviews a small number of selected practices that are of interest in the fight against this phenomenon in Section Five. This Section assesses practices that directly or indirectly help in reducing children’s exposure to child labour or WFCL and therefore constitute positive, preventive interventions or good practices to be brought to scale.

Main recommendations of the rapid assessment are presented in the concluding Section Six, where policy and programmatic considerations are summarized for future action. A concluding list of bibliographic references is presented in Section Seven.

**Definitions and International Legal Standards**

According to internationally recognized treaties and conventions, child labour is defined as work that deprives girls and boys of their childhood and dignity, and which is harmful to their physical and mental development. For a particular kind of work performed by a child to be considered child labour it may depend on the child’s age, the type and conditions of work, and the effects of the work on the child. Some kinds of work are always child labour – those performed by under-aged children, those which exceed the legal maximum number of hours and WFCL.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, specifies that child labour is a breach of a child’s right 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” (Article 32).

Children’s economic activities refer to all sorts of work performed by children, whether for the market or not; in family or commercial enterprises; paid or unpaid; full or part-time; on a casual
or regular basis; or in the formal or the informal sector. These activities are often incompatible with children’s full school attendance or performance in school by children but are not outright banned.

ILO Convention No.138 stipulates that the minimum age of admission into employment or work in any occupation shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling or less than 15 years of age. The Convention makes an exception to the age limit of 15 years in ILO member countries in which the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. In such circumstances, the minimum age of admission into employment or work in any occupation shall not be less than 14 years of age. The Convention also makes provisions for national law to further delimit categories of employment/work where the minimum age can vary, once there is agreement among tripartite constituents. In particular, it is understood and that children between the ages of 13 and 15 may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training.

Worst forms of child labour are deemed to be particularly harmful to children and their future development, thus qualifying for immediate elimination under the terms of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). ILO Convention 182 states explicitly in Article 3 that WFCL comprises “all forms of slavery or similar practices like the sale or trafficking of children, debt bondage [...] forced or compulsory labour [...] including use for armed conflict; use or procuring of a child for prostitution, pornography [...] use or procuring of children for illicit activities [...] for production or use of drugs [...].”

Youth underemployment and unemployment exist when young persons have not attained their full employment level in keeping with the conditions set out in the ILO Employment Policy Convention No. 122 adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1964. According to this Convention, full employment ensures that (i) there is work for all persons who are willing to work and look for work; (ii) that such work is as productive as possible; and (iii) that they have the freedom to choose the employment and that each workers has all the possibilities to acquire the necessary skills to get the employment that most suits them and to use in this employment such skills and other qualifications that they possess. The situations which do not fulfill objective (i) refer to unemployment, and those that do not satisfy objectives (ii) or (iii) refer mainly to underemployment.

Research Methodology

Quantitative Data

Child labour statistics are hard to find within traditional national censuses, labour market surveys, or labour force surveys. Household-based surveys, multiple indicators cluster surveys, are usually a better source of information when it comes to economic activities performed by children. And yet their contents tend to be very limited to only a few well established child labour indicators, falling very short in providing a more comprehensive explanation of the socio-economic dynamics surrounding the phenomenon. Child labour often entails complex and multidimensional dynamics

that cannot be reduced to simple statistics. It is now widely recognized that a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches is needed to better understand child labour and to guide innovative and successful policies.\textsuperscript{10}

Statistically, an unemployed person is defined as someone who does not have a job but is actively seeking work. In order to qualify as unemployed for official and statistical measurement, the individual must be without employment, willing and able to work, of the officially designated “working age” and actively searching for a position. The Youth unemployment rate is the number of 15-24 unemployed divided by the total number of people in the labour market. The youth unemployment ratio is the number of 15-24 unemployed divided by the total population aged 15-24 in a given economy.

It is important to highlight that differences continue to exist, however, in the way many national statistics programmes define a young person. Definitions of “youth” are based in part on the end use of the measurement. If one aims to measure, for example, the age span at which one is expected to enter the labour market then the statistical definition of 15 to 24 years may no longer be valid, given that today more and more young people postpone their entry into labour markets to well beyond the age of 25. Alternatively, if one was to aim for the broader characteristic-based classification of youth (as opposed to a simple age-based definition), then a more sociological viewpoint on what constitutes “youth” is needed. For example, one might wish to define “youth” as the transition stage from childhood to adulthood, in which case the age at which this transition begins will vary greatly between societies and indeed within the same society. From the perspective of a critical stage in the lifecycle, the relevant age could be as low as 10 years (e.g. street kids) to as high as mid to late 30s.\textsuperscript{11}

Given the considerable difference in the secondary data already available, the use of qualitative methodologies proposed for the current study will differ in their ultimate application.

\textbf{Qualitative Research}

While some initial form of quantitative child labour and youth employment research work has been previously conducted in Saint Lucia, a deep qualitative understanding of the dynamics surrounding children in economic activities it is widely recognized as of paramount importance to further direct programmes and policies in this country.

To arrive at such an understanding, the following approaches were employed during and after the seven-day field missions:

- **Non-probability sampling.** A sampling design where conditions of probability sampling are not fulfilled (as opposed to “probability sampling”).
- **Opportunistic sampling.** Taking advantage of people encountered during research by involving them as research participants. Particularly useful for hard-to-reach groups such as street children and sexually exploited children.


\textsuperscript{11} Global Employment Trends for Youth. (ILO 2006, Geneva).
• **Purposive sampling.** Targeting specific (named) people known to have information or to be opinion leaders.

• **Snowball sampling.** Selecting people by asking one participant or respondent for suggestions about, or introductions to, other possible respondents. Especially useful in research where respondents are difficult to locate or contact by other means.

Officials designated for the Regional Initiative as Focal Points within ministries responsible for labour served as the entry point for compiling an initial list of participants to the research. The secondary data analysis conducted by the researcher also suggested additional institutions or informants to be included in the respondent’s list. During field research, snowball sampling and opportunistic sampling were used to complete the list of respondents considered for the Study.

Informants were sought from among the following groups: Government officials and representatives, including at the district or local level; Government labour inspectors; police officers; trade union officials; teachers; employers; community leaders and members; representatives of NGOs and international organizations who have worked in the area; former child labourers and their families; parents of current child labourers; and parents of boys and girls who do not work; children involved in labour activities and youth themselves currently underemployed or unemployed.

The initial research design aimed at interviewing a minimum of 40 informants including children/youth, parents of working children/youth, employers, and informants from official institutions and NGOs. In Saint Lucia, 25 informants from Government offices, civil society organizations, employers’ and workers’ federations, social workers and education professionals were consulted through interviews, semi-structured interviews and snow-ball questions. An additional 15 children and youth also provided qualitative information on subjects relevant to the assessment. Direct observation of children and youth in their working environment was undertaken in Castries’ market during the day time, and in Gros Islet and Rodney Bay during the night since these places were known to have an active night-life for both young boys and girls. For the entire list of institutions and key informants contacted for the purpose of this assessment, see Annex 1.

In terms of the geographical focus of the research, an important caveat was established that, while the research would try as much as possible to collect material from all geographical areas of the identified country, primary or secondary data may only be collected from specific geographical areas, or specific occupations or industries, according to what was accessible during the short field work to be undertaken. This was considered as an open variable to be determined and refined only during field work. A field trip to one pre-selected rural/remote area outside the capital city was also planned. The researcher undertook field visits to Vieux Fort and Anse la Raye as these places were known to have recorded cases of child labour. The researcher also visited the ghetto community of Bruceville, which is known for its gang operations.

Given that field work was scheduled for only one week (including travel arrangements), the above data collection plan was to be considered ambitious.

The field mission was mostly entirely executed according to the research plan and entailed meetings with officials from the Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Finance, Department of Statistics; and the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports and Local Government. Structured focus
group discussions with children and youth were not organized, and yet the researcher was able to approach children and youth roaming the streets surrounding the hotels in Castries to have discussions with them about their dreams, predicaments, and current education and work habits. Despite limited advance notice, the local Focal Point was able to arrange visits to several communities which are considered to be “ghettos” or hot-spots where WFCL might be observed. A critical challenge however, was encountered in seeking access to children who are former victims of child labour. To address this challenge, the researcher was provided access to the Boys Training Center -- a correctional and rehabilitation institute for youth offenders -- where a brief focus group discussion with the children and youth residents allowed for the identification of a number of former child labourers within the group.

**Areas of Investigation**

As required in the Terms of Reference for the initial Rapid Assessment, research was undertaken to determine responses to the following:

- Which quantitative and qualitative data related to child labour and youth underemployment/unemployment is available in the selected countries?
- What is the nature and extent of child labour and youth unemployment/underemployment, including pull and push factors related to specific occupations in the selected countries?
- What are the characteristics of the working conditions performed by children and youth and their related hazards in the selected countries?
- What are the socio-economic descriptors of child labourers and unemployed/underemployed youth in the selected countries?
- What programmes are in place to prevent child labour and to rehabilitate children who are victims of worst forms of child labour? What programmes are in place to promote youth employment?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of child labourers on all the above mentioned topics? What are the perceptions of underemployed/unemployed youth on all the above mentioned topics?

Additionally, an analysis of the findings was required to address relevant issues in the following areas:

- Education including but not limited to the educational attainment and educational enrolment rates, by age, gender and geographical location in the selected countries.
- Apprenticeships/vocational training programmes including what is available to the youth in selected countries and what is the degree of participation by youth in these programmes.
- Policies including policies in place to improve access to decent work for children and youth and for monitoring mechanisms that are in place to eliminate child labour.
- Gender whether there is a gender bias in the identified thematic and if so, what are the underlying factors driving gender differences in child labour and youth employment in the selected countries.

Additional details of the planned research methodology including sample questions used for interviews are provided in the Data Collection Methodology for Rapid Assessment on Child Labour, see Annex 2.
Saint Lucia is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). It is classified as an upper middle income country. Tourism is the country’s main source of revenue and the industry is the island’s biggest employer. In 2014 and 2015, on the back of strong tourism inflows and lower oil prices, the economy has returned to growth after experiencing a recession in 2012 and close-to-zero growth in 2013. Transportation and the hotel industry were the sectors mostly contributing to the economic recovery.

Despite moderate economic recovery, unemployment rose to 24.4 per cent in 2014. Youth unemployment, in particular, reached 41.8 per cent. Despite progresses in the reform agenda the country is still confronted with a number of structural weaknesses and key bottlenecks, including low productivity and price competitiveness. In particular, a more effective and focused education system would help alleviate the skills mismatches weighing on labour market outcomes.

The 2006 Labour Code contains, in its Division 9, the Employment of Children and Young Persons Chapter stating the prohibition of any form of child labour. A “child” is defined as a person aged 15 and under. A “minor” means a person under the age of 18 years. A “young person” means a person who is over the age of 15 but who has not attained age 18. A minor may enter into a contract of employment only with the written consent of his or her parents or guardians. Notwithstanding this provision, a child cannot be employed before the minimum school leaving age as declared by the law enforced in the Country. As an exception, minors are allowed to be employed during school holidays only in light work (See Art 122:1). Currently, school compulsory education is fixed until the age of 16.

No child can be employed in typologies of work that are inappropriate for the age of the child, being dangerous for the child’s and the young person’s well-being, or place at risk the education,
safety, physical or mental health, or spiritual, moral and social development of the child (See Art. 122:2).

The above provisions do not apply to children enrolled in technical schools when the work is considered as part of the technical programme; for children under detention, reformatory, or in industrial programmes; for work carried out as a part of job-training or work experience activities; work done as a community service or for charity; work undertaken by youth organizations; or by children participating in artistic activities. For all these exceptions, the relevant authority would need to approve and supervise the nature of the work carried out by children. Children above the age of 13 can perform any sort of “light work” not prejudicial to their physical, moral and spiritual development, or without prejudice to their education (See Art. 122:3).

The Labour Code is complemented by the very old and dated Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Ordinance of 1938 ratifying the minimum age for public or private industrial work (14 years old), the prohibition of any industrial night undertaking for children below the age of 16, and the prohibition of children to work on ships (See Art. 3:1-4). Industrial undertaking includes work in: mines, quarries, manufacturing, construction, transporting passengers and goods, among others. The Ordinance is still effective despite the discrepancies with the minimum age definitions contained by the more recent Labour Code.

Chapter 10(9) of the Saint Lucia Children and Young Persons Act, revised in 2001, defines a “child” as any person below the age of 12 years, a “juvenile” as any person below the age of 16 years, and a “young person” as a person who has attained the age of 12 years and is under the age of 16 years. Chapter 3(9) of the Children and Young Persons Act also contains specific provisions for the prevention of cruelty and protection of children and juveniles. While labour, hazardous working conditions or WFCL are not specifically mentioned, the Act stipulates that all persons responsible for exposing children and juveniles to violence, ill-treatment, neglect, abandonment, or physical and mental suffering, are liable before the Law (Art. 5). Given that the emotional and physical consequences suffered by a child exposed to child labour and hazardous work described in the Labour Code are the same consequences identified for cruelty towards children presented in the Children and Young Persons Act, it is to be assumed that the liabilities for exposing children to labour or WFCL are the same as those foreseen for exposing children and juveniles to cruelty. The Children and Young Persons Act, Art. 6, explicitly prohibits parents or guardians from allowing children to beg, receive alms, or offer anything for sale in any street, premises or place. The Children and Young Persons Act has the same legal strength as the Labour Code, implying discrepancies in the application of provisions that are ruled by different minimum ages.

The Saint Lucia Criminal Code of 1957, revised in 1992 and 2005, presents complementary elements to protect children from any form of exploitation, including WFCL. A “child” and a “minor” are identically defined as a person below the age of 12. A “young person” means a person who is of or above the age of 12 years and under the age of 16. For instance, exposing any child below the age of seven to any situations likely to cause grievous harm to the child is considered a criminal offence punishable with 5 years imprisonment (Art. 170). It also prohibits sexual intercourse with minors, abduction, sale and trafficking, exposing children to drugs or alcohol and the like. The Criminal Code of Saint Lucia bans the procurement of women for sex purposes, and the use of women in any forced sex relationship (Art. 103 and 225).
The Saint Lucia Domestic Violence Act of 1995, revised in 2005, is also relevant to issues of child labour as many instances of WFCL are instigated within the household environment. The Act defines a child as a person below the age of 18, and “domestic violence” is presented as any act of violence or abuse perpetrated by a member of household upon a member of the same household which causes or is likely to cause physical, mental or emotional injury or harm to the abused party or any other member of the household.

The Division of Human services and Family Affairs, under the now Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports, Culture, and Local Government, also developed in April 2008 a Draft Protocol for the Management of Child Abuse and Neglect. This Protocol is a direct response to the many instances of child abuse reported to the Department. As stated by the Ministry’s Permanent Secretary, while complaints registered were mainly following a child abuse reporting perspective, most of them also contained labour exploitation components.

Another law relevant to the WFCL is the 2008 Drugs Prevention and Misuse Act which defines a “child” as a person under the age of 14. A “young person” means a person who is 14 years of age or upwards and under the age of 18. Art. 12 of the Act states the prohibition of possessing any controlled drugs within schools compounds, or within a radius of 100 yards from school premises. In addition, it is unlawful for any person to employ, hire, use, persuade, induce, entice or coerce any child or young person in the drug trade (Art. 13).

The 2000 Saint Lucian Youth Policy is currently under revision by the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports, Culture and Local Government. The Ministry launched a Youth Policy Review process for the formulation of a new strategic framework for youth programming in October 2015. In the Draft Policy, the term “youth” refers to young people who are between the ages of 10 and 35. The process is technically supported by a partnership with the Commonwealth. The Policy aims to create an improved environment that allows young people to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to the development of the country.

Overall, the above provides for a complex legal environment for the better protection of children and youth from all forms of abuse, including child labour and WFCL. The many revised Acts, Protocols or Policies and legislative measures have been developed to empower the different Divisions concerned with children and youth to support and improve the status of children and their families and protect them from violence and abuse of any form.

Coordination and Data Sharing Mechanisms

Saint Lucia is characterized as a small population and a limited territory, therefore cumbersome
coordinating mechanisms between institutions and actors are deemed not appropriate to the strategies operated by the Government. However, this situation has often paved the way for coordination modalities that are based on personal efforts rather than an institutionalized culture of data management. The above is particularly evident, for instance, in the absence of a tripartite body in Saint Lucia that could also periodically review progress on preventing child labour and WFCL. Members of the employers’ and trade unions’ federations do have regular consultations with the Ministry of Labour, but these meetings do not take place within an established and defined overall framework for tripartite dialogue. No legal provision is made for the existence of such a body, and yet the commitment by the new Ministry of Labour to soon establish a Tripartite Committee is a first response to the realization that formal coordinating structures are necessary to tackle some of the issues concerned with child labour.

Beyond the commitment to establish a Tripartite Committee, there appears to be no other existing inter-ministerial or inter-sectoral mechanism for sharing information on child labour, or issues pertinent to child labour including school drop-out, vocational training programmes, school-to-work transition, labour market information, employment statistics, and the like. It appears that the majority of data sharing is done informally or through the media.

The only coordinating mechanism that currently exists and that could have some relevance for issues concerning child labour or WFCL is the Social Safety Net Coordination Framework, under the Public Assistance Programme – Koudmen Ste. Lisi (KSL). During the piloting of the Social Safety Net Programme in Saint Lucia, the coordination structure established was an early attempt to create a forum for discussion on social protection, but the KSL format lacked the political support needed to succeed. Monthly meetings resulted in a dynamic and active asset for the KSL pilot and the social safety net field. However, as implementation of the initial pilot progressed, the monthly meeting schedule slowed to ad hoc meetings rendering the coordination weak and ineffective. This situation was further aggravated by changes to key programme coordination, supervision and monitoring staff. The Social Safety Net Programme Reform acknowledged the weakening role of the coordination structure established, and accordingly, specific attention to strengthening the collaboration among actors was again prioritized as per 2015.


Section Three

Findings on Child Labour

Extent and Practices

The Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) 2012 provides initial quantitative results on child labour: About 1 in every 12 children in the country were engaged in labour activities, equivalent to an overall incidence of 7.5 per cent. However, this result hides a staggering difference between age categories. The percentage of children 5-11 years old involved in labour activities was in fact 11.5 per cent, compared to the same percentage for children 12-14 years old (0.2 per cent). This result seems to suggest that the involvement of children in labour was nearly exclusively a problem for younger children. In reality, we noted that the involvement of children in both economic activities and household chores was significantly higher for the 12-14 age group (16.6 and 68.8 per cent respectively) compared to the 5-11 age group (11.5 and 46.1 per cent respectively). Even though the recorded economic activities only happen for very few hours per week, they would count as “child labour” for the 5-11 age group (based on the MICS threshold of just 1 hour work per week or 28 hours of household chores per week), and “child work” for the 12-14 age group (threshold of 14 hours of work per week or 28 hours of household chores per week).

This is an important point that will be developed further. A 7.5 per cent incidence of child labour is below the regional average, and yet it still seems a high prevalence when compared to what was observed during field work. The same UNICEF Global Statistics Database on child labour has revised the analysis done for the MICS 2012 and presented a lower figure of 4 per cent total incidence of child labour in Saint Lucia in 2014.19 And yet this revised figure still seems high compared to what is observed in the field. Then, in 2015, UNICEF presented yet another reduced approximate figure of less than 2 per cent in its Study “Mapping of child well-being in Saint Lucia”. This set of subsequent revisions and uncertainty of quantitative data points to the need for proper qualitative information to better contextualize the numbers and provide a more realistic portrayal of the child labour situation in Saint Lucia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Incidence of Child Labour in Different Surveys (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incidence of child labour among children 5-14 years old</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author starting from MICS 2012, MICS 2012 re-analyzed, and LFS 2015

During school break direct observation of participants was conducted in market places and beach areas of three settlements -- Castries, Vieux Fort, and Anse la Raye -- where in the past, child labourers had been observed and working children are a rare sight in the peak hours of the day. In Castries, the capital of the country and the hub for its biggest market, we counted seven children vending products in street shops, and most respondents at the market would report that working children are nowadays a very rare phenomenon. The situation has, in fact, evolved with time. When Saint Lucia had an important export trade of bananas, most children would help

19 Available at: http://data.unicef.org/child-protection/child-labour.html
their parents in harvesting bananas on a specific day of the week. Wednesday was “bananas day” as teachers would recall, and classes would go semi-deserted because the priority was given to the harvesting of bananas. There was a “banana culture” in Saint Lucia in which a large number of independent, small-scale farmers cultivated bananas for export while simultaneously growing food crops for their own consumption. Bananas were harvested throughout the year and this afforded a steady financial support to families. The use of children in this specific crop harvesting was essential. But with the downturn of the banana trade that severely contracted the country’s economy since 1990, the use of children in agriculture also became redundant.

To further verify the total incidence of child labour, this Rapid Assessment approached the Saint Lucia Bureau of Statistics and requested the creation of special tables generated from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of 2015. As we can see in Table 2, the incidence of child labour in the 15-17 age group is negligible. As the LFS does not collect data for the children below the age of 15, it is not possible to make any conclusive comparison with the MICS 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Population by Economic Activity Status and Child Labour Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labour employed – Persons aged 15 - 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not child labour employed - Persons aged 15 - 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed - Persons aged 15 - 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically inactive - Persons aged 15 - 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person over 17 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person under 15 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: LFS 2015*

On hazardous child work, since no data is available, we extrapolated from the LFS of 2015 the only few quantitative data that were accessible and pertinent. By using “decent work” standards and definition, we considered an employment in “decent work” as a proxy for not being in hazardous working conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Employed Persons 15-17 Years in Decent Work and Child Labour Status (Number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decent Work</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not In decent work</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child labour employed - Person 15 - 17 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person over 17 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Central Statistics Office of Saint Lucia*

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21 Note: For the sake of this analysis, “decent work” is defined as person who has national insurance coverage and has at least one of the following conditions met: Receives a pay slip, has a written contract of employment, and obtains maternity leave.
Overall, all data seem to indicate that child labour prevalence is extremely limited at least for the 12 to 17 age groups. Direct observation and field visit would extend this statement also for the younger population of children despite the fact that the data at hand cannot be considered conclusive.

Gender and Rural/Urb...
Looking at the urban/rural divide, 8.2 per cent of urban children were in labour conditions compared to 7.3 per cent of rural children. The re-analyzed MICS 2012, on the contrary, shows no difference in the incidence of child labour between urban and rural children (4 per cent).

Analysis by Wealth Quintiles

The most significant element emerging from the data collected is a strong correlation between child labour and poverty. The poorer the household the higher the probability of children having to contribute to the economy of the family by working inside or outside the household. This work can sometimes take the shape of exploitative labour or hazardous work.

The incidence of child labour among the 5-11 age group belonging to the poorest 40 per cent of households is more than three times higher (18.4 per cent) when compared to children coming from the richest 60 per cent of households (5.8 per cent) (See Table 5)

The majority of child labourers in the poorest 40 per cent of households work exclusively within family businesses (14.5 per cent). In addition, households with two or more children have been found displaying lower levels of child well-being and being slightly more exposed to labour risks for all age categories.

Two other indicators often associated to intergenerational poverty are the degree of education of the principal caretaker, as well as the child belonging to a single-female headed household. In both cases we have confirmation that in Saint Lucia households with a primary caretaker having a low education attainment (none or primary school level education), have a higher incidence of child labour (8.3 against 6.8 per cent for primary caretakers with higher education status). In the same manner, single-female headed households have a marginally higher vulnerability to child labour than households headed by men (Well-being index of 97.2 per cent for children aged 5 to 11 years old, compared to a well-being index of 98.9 per cent respectively).

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Child Labour is a variable used to create the overall child well-being index. So the higher the well-being index, the weaker the probability of being engaged in child labour.
Primary and secondary school attendance rates in Saint Lucia are high, and they display little difference by gender. Also, there are hardly any children without access to information and communication technologies: Ninety-seven per cent of children have access to a computer, a TV/radio or a phone at home. The LFS presents a remarkable difference between males and females when it comes to achievements and completion. Women display greater achievements than same-age men. Twelve per cent of women reported having a diploma, certificate or degree against only 8 per cent of men. An additional 31 per cent of women also reported having a General Certificate of Education (GCE), against 27 per cent for men. This gender difference deepens by looking only at the 15-29 years group, with 11 per cent of females having a diploma, certificate or degree and 55 per cent having a GCE. These same percentages decrease to 6 per cent and 48 per cent among boys and young men.

30 Ibid.
31 Quarterly LFS. (Saint Lucia Bureau of Statistics 2012), Castries.
Table 5: Incidence of Child Labour by Wealth (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of children ages 5-11 involved in:</th>
<th>Percentage of children ages 12-14 involved in:</th>
<th>Total child labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work more than 1 hour per week</td>
<td>Household chores less than 28 hours per week</td>
<td>Child labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorest 40%</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest 60%</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MICS 2012

School drop-out has been reported by many informants to this and previous studies\textsuperscript{33} as a serious problem, and independent studies have shown a significantly high proportion of primary-school-age children are out of school -- 17 per cent for both boys and girls.\textsuperscript{34} However, national statistics partially contradict this to be a major issue, at least on a national scale.\textsuperscript{35} The overall drop-out rate at primary school level ranged from 1.3 to 0.6 per cent in the past 10 years. During the same period, boys have been recorded as having an average 25 per cent higher propensity to drop-out than girls at the primary school level. Yet, in the past three years, girls have recorded the same or a higher drop-out rate compared to boys, showing an increased trend for girls abandoning primary school. Repetition levels in primary school education increased in the recent 10 years, passing from 2.1 to 2.8 per cent. More boys than girls repeat primary school education, with a rate of 3.8 against 2.2 per cent.\textsuperscript{36} And yet, these average rates hide very deep differences among institutions and districts. In some districts, the average repeaters rate is 4.6 per cent (District One), and in some schools, the repeaters rate is 14.5 per cent (Roblot Government School in District Seven) (See Table 6).

For secondary school children and youth ranging from 12 to 17 years of age, the picture is not much different. The average drop-out rate varied from 2.4 to 1.6 per cent. Boys have historically been 2.5 times more likely to drop out from school, but in recent years the drop-out rate for both sexes became more and more similar.

During a set of nation-wide consultations held in Saint Lucia in 2001, communities, youth and the education establishment were asked to elaborate on the role of the school system in preparing youth for the work environment and for life. Informants spoke of “a widespread sense among male youth that education attainment did not translate readily into productive and profitable economic activity. This fed disillusionment and cynicism and contributed to the susceptibility of some youth to the culture of drug use and commerce. Deviant and sub-culture involvement was, among certain sections of the youth community, associated with material advancement, which was critical to

\textsuperscript{33} Developing Social Policy for Youth, with Special Reference to Young Men in Saint Lucia. LC/CAR/G.667. (ECLAC 2001).
\textsuperscript{34} FHI 360 (2014). Saint Lucia National Education Profile. Update 2014
\textsuperscript{35} Pockets of districts or schools with a very high drop-out rate, on the contrary, do exist in the country.
\textsuperscript{36} Education Statistical Digest. Past trends, present position and projections. (Ministry of Education Department, Government of Saint Lucia 2016).
self-esteem, particularly among boys. Within the education system, the predominant emphasis on academic attainment was not encouraging of all-round personal development and did not strengthen character or the self-confidence of youth who were not academic achievers. Allied to the inability of the traditional school system to tap into creativities and talents of the range of student population was its unwillingness to encourage individuality. The classroom, therefore, was not as interesting or as stimulating as it could be.  

The Director of the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) reported that many employers believe that the education system in Saint Lucia is not able to meet the needs of both the youth and the labour market in that it does not provide the skills that employers require and it impedes young people’s successful transition from school to work. Consequently, the majority of young people fail to find decent work or pursue meaningful careers. Employers require workers with life and technical skills, a positive attitude and the ability to assimilate new knowledge rapidly and apply it effectively.

Increasingly, the education system is causing students to fall behind and drop out, especially males, as females perform better in school, have higher academic achievements and pursue higher education. Only 23 per cent of students graduate from secondary school with five Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) subjects -- the benchmark for success, and an increasingly necessary requirement for attending college and for securing a decent job. Informants claim that the boys who show adaptation or behavioral problems are often confronted by teachers instead of being helped, they are suspended from class participation thus becoming easy target for recruitment by gang members who take advantage of them for drug purposes. Teachers would acknowledge this dynamic, but claim that because of the already high pupil/teachers ratio, it is not possible for them to focus on individual cases, leaving aside the majority of the class. Yet statistics indicate a relatively low student/teacher ratio in both primary and secondary schools (21 and 13 respectively).

Table 6: Drop-out Rates by School Level and Sex (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Drop-out rate at primary level</th>
<th>Drop-out rate at secondary level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author starting from data presented in Ministry of Education 2015 Statistical Digest

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38 Youth Empowerment Project. (National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) 2015. Castries).
Teachers often reported that the family background of children and the necessity to send children to work is the primary reason for them to drop-out or to repeat grades. Despite awareness of the problem, the school system does not have the necessary tools to respond to the crisis. As explained by a District Counsellor during a group discussion, for the 74 primary schools and the 23 secondary schools of the country “there is only one single truancy officer. In the entire island, there are only eight district counsellors (and these counsellors also have the task to supervise counsellors in secondary schools)”\(^{40}\). While the school environment does not provide children with enough social support, the same has been reported for social services working at the community level. Within the Ministry of Equity and Social Justice, the count was 11 social workers, four social welfare officers, and six social workers based in the family court. In addition to these professionals, there currently are 15 to 20 social transformation officers working to empower communities in Saint Lucia. Between the school system and the social services, the count was around 50 civil servants in charge of supporting individual children, families or communities for the island; and the majority of the personnel registered had several other tasks in addition to those mentioned, making the entire system to support vulnerable children and families, insufficient to manage with the risks and vulnerabilities experienced by children and their families. In addition, the school counsellors who are available to children are more career counsellors as opposed to guidance counsellors. They are more active in directing children towards the right career path, and less experienced in providing life guidance for children.\(^{41}\)

Teachers also reported the lack of involvement of parents in school activities to be an area of challenge. Especially in some of the most depressed communities, parents are not following their children’s performance in school. Children who display more behavioural problems in school are often associated with families that have very little interest in supervising their academic performance and social skills at school. Teachers are then left with no responsible adult to discuss the challenges faced by the low-performing child. Some teachers resort to the extensive use of suspension of the troublesome children from class, accruing the socialization problems of the child by denying access to classes.

“Students who are expelled from schools also find themselves expelled from the mainstream education system, since these students will be unable to access another school or an institution of high learning, or a second chance programme. The education system does not have any room to facilitate the reintegration of these youth and children, or to facilitate their rehabilitation. Consequently, these students will most likely find themselves unemployed, and often resort to socially deviant behaviors”\(^{42}\). Despite the availability of some TVET or second chance education programmes, limited opportunities and prospects contribute to youth development, especially for those from vulnerable communities, and as a result, a strong sense of hopelessness, discontent and frustration is developed.\(^{43}\) This creates a vicious cycle of further violence and exclusion as expelled youth will be more likely to exhibit anti-social behaviors, become more vulnerable to recruitment into WFCL, and get even more involved in criminal activities, thus further negatively impacting their families, communities and society at large.\(^{44}\)

\(^{40}\) School Counselor. Personal Communication. (August 2016).
\(^{41}\) Ibid.
\(^{42}\) School Teacher and Training Agent. Personal Communication. (August 2016).
\(^{43}\) See also CARICOM 2001. Developing Social Policy for Youth with Special Reference to Young Men in Saint Lucia. GENERAL LC/CAR/G.667.
\(^{44}\) Youth Empowerment Project. (National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) 2015. Castries).
From the perspective of a group of primary school professionals, the main problem of children performing poorly academically and socially in Saint Lucia, is the fact that schools are not equipped with appropriate tools to address the psychological impact of traumatic events hampering the emotional development of school-going children. Many school going-children from ghetto communities have witnessed severe traumatic events before the age of 10. This would typically include witnessing suicides, extreme violence, killings, gang revenge murders, rape, armed robbery, alcoholism, abandonment, betrayal, and the like. All these traumas are not addressed by school teachers, and yet they pose a major barrier to the cognitive capacity of children to learn, and to their emotional development.45

All good parenting skills programmes, positive discipline programmes, or corrective thinking interventions recorded in Saint Lucia are only implemented in a small number of secondary schools (mainly private schools). Given the nature of the social challenges faced by children within their own communities, several headmasters have expressed the necessity to incorporate these interventions from the primary school level and to expand their implementation to at least include schools which are attended by children from marginal communities and families. Additionally, teachers are questioning the soft skills programmes that are presented to youth in secondary schools, when the same youth are exposed to social environments within their households and communities that have vastly different values.

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45  Focus Group Discussion. Personal Communication. (August 2016).
WFCL in the Gang Culture and Alienated Communities

While general child labour does not seem to be an issue in Saint Lucia, WFCL, on the contrary, is a very significant problem observed during field mission and only partially documented by previous studies. As the Minister of Labour has expressed, the majority of cases of WFCL in the island can be directly associated to significant shortfalls in children's social or family environment. This also includes a poorly performing school environment that hides dangers and risks.

The WFCL mostly reported are those associated with the “gang culture”. Urban gangs in Saint Lucia are nowadays similar to the early street gangs researched in the United States. “Modern street gangs have evolved into tribal organizational structures. These new urban tribes have developed into a subculture in the streets of the urban jungle. They claim territory, are self-supporting, have their own language and customs, and establish their own rules and codes of conduct. Their customs are passed to new members by rites of passage from generation to generation, thus ensuring the continuance of the gang. Gang members identify themselves as a people that is separate from the rest of society.” These gangs are mainly established in peri-urban areas or poor communities. While some gangs are better organized than others, on average they are not highly structured but rather community-based. Their existence coincides with parallel community structures of leadership, and they are fuelled by high unemployment rates.

Saint Lucia displays one of the highest unemployment rates of the Caribbean Islands (23.5 per cent), but youth unemployment is in the order of 44 per cent. During the 2008-2014 period, general unemployment rose by 8 per cent, but joblessness among young people aged 15 to 24 rose by double (15 per cent).

Gangs provide Saint Lucian youth with an alternative use of their time and optional belief system. The high youth unemployment rate is often used to rationalize youth seeking a sense of belonging by associating with street gangs rather than contributing to society through legitimate work activities. The traditional belief system once reinforced in society, communities, families, churches and schools, is nowadays openly challenged by an alternative system of values. And as youth start their own families, their children are automatically brought up within this new culture and set of values. For these new generations, the “normal” set of values has nowadays become the one practiced by the gangs. As the employer of one of the largest businesses in the island has reported, “many youth simply do not have the desire to work full-time and in a continuous way. They are available for work for a few days, then when they have earned enough to satisfy their immediate dreams, they stop working until they again need to buy something special. They see no value in working other than immediate needs satisfaction”. Again, another business person reported that they have long maintained a summer internship programme for youth to help them acquire basic skills and competences, but since the past summer the schools were not able to find youth interested in attending the programme.

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47. LFS 2015. (Saint Lucia Central Statistics Office).
As a Regional Study in the Caribbean reported: “Many youth are ill-equipped to function in mainstream society with its more formal governance and legal structures and traditional civil society values and demands and this predisposes them to involvement in gangs. Most, if not all of these gangs are based in marginalized communities which give shelter to them and provide a ready workforce by virtue of the large number of unattached youth (mainly males) that live in them. The gangs in turn provide protection to the community members as well as financial support to many of them. They also exact a heavy toll on community members who do not submit to their rule. Young males in particular, who are often forced or influenced into participation in illegal activities, are the primary victims and perpetrators of violent crimes, although women and children are increasingly becoming victims and perpetrators of murder and other forms of violence”.48

Stigmatization and alternative forms of aggregation (gangs) are two sides of the same coin. Areas with high levels of criminality lead to the stigmatization of the entire population living in those areas. This in turn provides scope for gangs to increase their criminal activities by having easier access to marginalized youth and recruitment of children for WFCL.49 Social exclusion associated with belonging to some poor communities is also a reason for stigma and segregation by teachers and peers, again increasing the likelihood of school drop-out.50 Finally, studies have also shown that the manner in which communities build their social identity often mirror the ways the group is seen by the others.51

During a focus-group discussion conducted for the Saint Lucia social mapping exercise, one respondent provided a very compelling explanation of the everyday reality lived by children in his communities: They are “barrel children”.52 These are children left behind53, they are pushed everywhere, subjected to any form of risk, and they do not enjoy any anchor, they float in a sea of dangers, with no positive community supervision or support. And often those that should keep them safe are the very same people that, on the contrary, expose them to greater abuses. Others would refer to these children as “kids on the blocks”, hanging around all the day long smoking, listening to music, or watching TV.

As the ILO Report entitled Global Employment Trends for Youth notes that there is a proven link between youth unemployment and social exclusion as the inability to find employment creates a sense of uselessness and idleness among young people that can lead to increased crime, mental health problems, violence, conflicts and use of drugs; and that those most at risk are unskilled

49 Youth Are the Future. The Imperative of Youth Employment for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean. (Caribbean Development Bank 2015).
53 The term ‘barrel children’ was originally associated to the concept of children left ‘at home’ by parents who migrated/ moved abroad ostensibly in search of a better life. With the parents absent they were often left in the care of elderly grandparents or other relatives with fewer emotional ties or who lacked the ability to care for them. These children/families relied on ‘barrels’ of goods sent home by the migrated parents or on financial remittances. In this situation, many children were vulnerable to physical and psychological abuse, emotional instability, often resulting in them seeking inclusion/acceptance outside the family, in gangs etc. While a good part of the original meaning of the use of the term remained, informants to this Study used it more to express the lack of proper guidance (anchor) by vulnerable children.
youth. A recent Study by MercyCorp concludes that youth are not attracted to violence only due to unemployment or underemployment. It is rather a miscellaneous collection of elements that includes a sense of isolation, exclusion, lack of options and opportunities, unemployment and underemployment, frustrations, feelings of revolt and anger. All these elements nurture a sense of injustice that then finds its “natural” expression in violent and anti-social behaviors. The isolation is further compounded by the inability of development assistance programmes to reach the poorest. Youth in gangs are not reached by any social intervention, including the Saint Lucia Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP). And yet more and more youth are joining gangs. Gangs have an intrinsic attraction that goes beyond feelings of empowerment and inclusion. Traditional aggregation structures such as church groups or boy-scouts do not seem, on the contrary, capable of displaying the same capacity to attract new generations. The traditional aggregation groups for youth seem to suffer from being “taken for granted” or for being less dynamic than what is required by “barrel children”.

In the ghetto context, caretakers often live in emotional isolation, physical poverty, and with an inescapable feeling of despair. Women are the ones most affected by barriers in accessing the labour market. Despite higher educational achievements, women are more disadvantaged than men in competing in the labour market in terms of participation, employment rates, as well as earnings. Greater household responsibilities have been presented as one of the main reasons for the lower participation rate by women in the labour market. Especially for single-female headed household, children can become an asset to help with the daily survival. As presented by one respondent, “The majority of these women live in very promiscuous communities, most of them have in excess of five to six children, often with different partners. They do not have any stable relationships and they often replicate what they have lived in their own family of origin. They can be very young, as young as 14 or 15 when they have their first child. Their bodies are used as their means to survive. And when they get old, they have no hesitation to use their children for the same purpose”. Especially in rural areas, the problem of incest is reported to be more prominent. Gambling is also reported as a social issue affecting children. Social workers have witnessed several cases of parents losing in gambling and giving away their daughters for sex slavery as a form of payment.

A common feature that seems to emerge from the interviews held is that the notion of empathy towards other people including siblings, household members or members of the same community is deeply compromised in the eyes of these “kids on the blocks” that are at the same time victims and perpetrators of the same social system that failed them throughout their existence. The increased internal mobility whereby many individuals are constantly travelling from one area to another, has blurred the demarcations between rural and urban zones, and also has as a consequence, the weakening of family ties and social capital.

As a boy at the Boys Training Centre reported, the gang members are the only ones who have accepted him. In a gang he can move up and become “someone”. Pistols make him accepted by other people. The different gang-related WFCL recorded during this assessment were:

• Children being used for transporting drugs (marijuana and cocaine predominantly), including transporting drugs in schools.
• Children being used for trading drugs or collecting payments.
• Children staying at street corners to give the alarm when rival gangs or police are approaching.
• Children being given small fire arms or machetes for either self-defence or to conduct incursions into rival territories.
• Children being used for robberies.
• Children being given away for short-term sexual intercourse.
• Children being regularly forced to perform sexual acts with step fathers or benefactors to the household.
• Children being involved in pickpocketing, extortion or violence, including mutilating and killing.
• Children forced to perform all sorts of physical and sexual violence towards peers.
• Children involved in gambling and theft.
• Children embarking on boats to smuggle products outside of Saint Lucia or to trade drugs with arms or other stolen items.
• Children working on marijuana plantations.

Unlike previous reports which have emphasized the link between the tourism industry and child labour in Saint Lucia\(^{58}\), or the growing concern for children being trafficked for sex purposes\(^{59}\), this rapid assessment has gathered evidence of a growing concern for children being affiliated with gangs, but little or no evidence of a growing problem of children being trafficked for sexual purposes, or children being recruited in WFCL in the tourism industry.

In all the above situations, children are used by older gang members to perform illicit activities in exchange for pocket money, protection, or simply to enjoy the feeling of belonging to a gang. It is not possible to state an average age at which the enrolment into gangs starts, since from birth, children grow up and live with their parents/caretakers within this culture. The gender analysis would also suggest that the difference between boys and girls is not as marked as mainstream society would assume. Additionally, one cannot assume that girls and young women are always the victims in the situation, as girls have been found to have the same desire as boys to be part of street gangs, to contribute to the street culture, to have the feeling of empowerment and status that is associated with being part of a prominent gang. Being the girlfriend of a known gangster could be reason for much pride to a girl.

The ghetto appears to be no place for sentiments and soft parenting. The survival instinct guides daily choices, and yet some informants have pointed to a more complex situation where abuse and neglect are not just a strategy for survival but actually intrinsic elements of the ghetto culture that has evolved. As this phenomenon has been increasing over the years, some respondents have stated that Saint Lucia has a long history of neglecting its children, and a wounded child is a wounded nation.

Families and Community Perspectives

Places such as La Tourney, Bruceville, Augier, Pierrot, Micoud, and Choiseul have been reported to be at a higher risk for the involvement of children in WFCL. In these vulnerable and marginalized communities, the rate of criminality and suicide can be up to three times higher than the average national rate.

Community members were consulted to grasp a better understanding on the extent, magnitude and drivers for the WFCL in Saint Lucia. The main themes cited by community workers as relevant in creating an environment of “vulnerability” for children are:

- Low economic development, poverty and material hardship;
- Lack of community infrastructure and facilities for children, youth and parents;
- Barriers in accessing education and training facilities;
- Poorly performing education and training facilities;
- Widespread criminality, lack of law enforcement, and gang culture;
- Unemployment and lack of professional opportunities for youth and their parents;
- Broken families and poor parenting, including uneducated parents and emotionally absent caretakers;
- Widespread use of drugs and alcohol;
- Progressive disintegration of the role of elderly people as role models and custodians of values and traditions;
- The weakening of communities, social capital, mutual help, reciprocity and feeling of “being one”;
- Perception of a social divide between the poor and the better off, leading to the feeling of being abandoned by the Government, sentiment of disillusion and betrayal.

On a macro level perspective, the size of the informal sector in the country; the susceptibility to natural disasters; the size and openness of the economy; credit and insurance market failures, and human underdevelopment were also reported as drivers for vulnerability in Saint Lucian communities.60 All these elements are both cause and consequence for the expanding of a culture where violence and abuse are not seen as deviant attitudes but rather as normal behaviours, and where children become normal actors for the survival of the ghetto itself.

Crime and violence also have significant financial costs for Saint Lucia as reportedly it generates more than 3 million USD in lost benefits to society and 7.7 million USD in lost benefits to private individuals annually (0.4 and 0.6 per cent of national annual GDP respectively). On the contrary, preparing young people for the workplace by developing their vocational and life skills, and thus reducing youth unemployment, discontent and crime, would cause Saint Lucia’s economy to grow by 2.46 per cent of GDP.61 And yet community respondents are not necessarily in favour of additional training or second chance programmes for marginalized youth, but rather, in favour of harsh remedies or law enforcement action.62 This is compatible with national approaches for first

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time offenders. Saint Lucian policy-makers have, in fact, taken a hard stand against the increased rate of youth criminality by increasing penalties and enhancing harsh law enforcement action.

Corporal punishment and harsh discipline are believed by communities to be a partial remedy to the deviant behaviors of children, and corporal punishment seems to be widely accepted as a method to restore discipline. Forty per cent of children are subject to recurring harsh discipline at home and close to 20 per cent of parents are in favor of physical punishment for educating their children. According to the MICS 2012, an overall 68 per cent of children aged 2–14 years experienced at least one form of punishment from their parents or other adult household members during the month preceding the survey. Boys are more vulnerable to verbal, psychological and physical aggressions than girls. In addition, 71 per cent of boys, and 64 per cent of girls aged 2–14 years are experiencing some violent discipline method. The use of violent discipline is slightly more prevalent in urban areas (77 per cent) compared to rural areas (65 per cent). Interestingly, the age group more exposed to severe corporal punishment or discipline is the youngest age group of 2 to 4 year olds. Children from the poorest households are more likely to be disciplined using a violent method (75 per cent) compared to those from the richest households (62 per cent).

Case Study: Pretty Lion and the Life of Children in the Ghetto

During one of the visits to ghetto communities, we met and interviewed “Pretty Lion” in Bruceville, Vieux Fort. The ghetto was semi-deserted and strangely calm. Very few luxury cars passed through the streets at a very slow speed. Inside, behind dark glasses, people looked at us suspiciously. A couple of people drinking at the bar asked us the purpose of our visit to the ghetto, with visible guns under their t-shirts. Most of the gang members were attending a funeral that evening. Some youths from the ghetto community had been killed the previous day in a gang revenge assault, just a few hundred meters from where we were standing. On the hills above us, a colorful modern villa stood in striking contrast with the surrounding shacks. It is the villa of the local boss, with the ghetto at its foot. We sat on the porch of a bar and asked a young ghetto member, Pretty Lion, to participate in an interview with us to better understand the drivers for WFCL in his community.

Although criminal activity by some gangs is prevalent in Bruceville, Pretty Lion loves his community, loves his home and would not leave unless it was absolutely necessary. He has been on a mission to convince the “ghetto youts” to stay away from crime and focus on education.

He admits that gang involvement and prostitution is being done in the community by children and young people. While there are no “bomb” houses in the community, the sale of sex is quite common by females within all age groups and not necessarily by children.

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64 Saint Lucia Child Protection Statistical Digest. (UNICEF 2015).
only. Females who offer sex for compensation are not pimped and do “jammette” on
their own. They are not necessarily forced, they just got accustomed to the easy life and
receiving presents.

He believes that young persons of both sexes resort to crime (i.e. gang activity and
prostitution) because the “glamorous life” appeals to them. The wearing of brand name
shoes and clothing is top priority for them.

He encourages his 14 year old daughter to be self-sufficient so that when “tings tight” she
will not have to resort to prostitution as a means of getting the things that she may want.
For example, to “hold strain”, he teaches her that tea can be brewed from the herbs that
are grown in the back yard and not necessarily bought from the supermarket. The Police
sometimes “roll on the soldiers” in the ghetto though there is not always the need to do
that. After all, some of the crime being committed in Bruceville is perpetrated by non-
resident gangs.

Many of the young people who have dropped out of school or gone astray are fatherless,
and the mothers offer no meaningful parental support. However, that is not to say
that there are no role models for them. Pretty Lion himself, has made it his personal
responsibility to counsel and coach the “youts” whenever possible. For young persons,
Ghetto life is more appealing than attending school because the education system can
be very intimidating with all of its focus being placed on academics. So for children and
young people who are not academically inclined, yet are skillful and talented with their
hands, they find it more rewarding to board a “fibre” (boat) to Saint Vincent and the
Grenadines to transact the sale of “weed”.

Once, he was arrested for possession of marijuana, but he learned the lesson. Pretty Lion
wants to work, and as a matter of fact, loves to work. But work is scarce and the process
of preparing formal applications is seen as a waste of time and a demotivating process. In
the many applications which he has filled, he has never been called to work. The desire
to work is obvious as the “youts” in Bruceville never pass up the opportunity to work
whenever the Government’s “STEP Programme” (Short Term Employment Programme)
is active.

Drug use and sale is common among school children. The main drug being traded is
“weed”, which is mostly sold as a “5 bag”. Many children carry the weed to school, which
has been grown at home by family members. Cocaine is transported or distributed by
young persons or children who are used as mules. To avoid detection/confiscation by the
police, young men would arrange the collection or exchange of cocaine far off the island
in open waters. It is not unusual for a vessel to depart with “soldiers” who never make it
back to shore.

Pretty Lion suggests two possible solutions to the problems above. Firstly, parents should
be taught good parenting and child nurturing skills; and secondly, the education system
needs to be adjusted to cater for children who may have problems learning from the
teaching methods that are currently used.
The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) is a flagship Programme implemented by the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) to provide vulnerable youth, aged 17-25 years, access to the job market and sustainable livelihood pathways that will prepare them to play positive roles within their families, workforce and communities. It is a second-chance opportunity Programme initially piloted with support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Youth Foundation. The current phase of the initiative is funded solely by the Government of Saint Lucia and it is particularly relevant to combat the WFCL because most of the beneficiaries are children and youth previously involved in prostitution, drug dealing, gang membership and the like.

To ensure that the skills Project meets national and regional certification requirements, NSDC will continue to use Occupational and Competency Standards (OCS) for all training using the CARICOM and Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA) curricula, and quality control instruments recognized by TVET Agencies and National Training Institutes (NTI).

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Justice, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Ministry of Education, are the main institutional bodies behind the support of the Project. The NSDC can also count on the support of a growing network of private employers and agencies for the creation of a public private partnership for internships and job placement. With an “all-hands-on-deck” approach, it is envisioned that many previously un-engaged but relevant public or private stakeholders will take part in this initiative. The NSDC has opened four training Centers throughout the island, and they each host a restaurant that allows the initiative to generate revenue that is reinvested into the Project to pay the salaries of the 70 trainers and workers. The recidivism rate among trained youth is minimal. Youth who manage to complete the two cycles’ curricula, who graduate, and who undertake the placement with an employer, do not go back to the ghetto culture, they break the cycle of poverty and exclusion.

Within the YEP, the Center is also thinking of how to address the gangs’ bosses negative influence on trained and rehabilitated youth, as in the past they have faced difficulties related to the bosses ordering students not to graduate or complete the YEP cycle of study. The Project assists between 500 and 1200 youth per year, and the selection criteria positively discriminates for youth coming from ghetto communities, poor neighborhoods, or very vulnerable households. The majority of beneficiaries are between 12 and 25 years old. The individual case management of the Project is effective and it involves several institutions and actors including schools, employers, social workers and law enforcement agents. While the coordination among actors is effective when it comes to the single beneficiaries, there is no overall coordination among the same actors when it comes to broader policy decisions.
Some Good Practice: The Second Step Programme (SSP)

The Second Step Programme (SSP) is a tool developed by the Committee for Children and introduced to Saint Lucia by UNESCO two years ago. The Programme has been taken on board at the primary level by a number of schools in each district of the country. Teachers and principals have been trained in the use of the tools which consists of a skills programme to teach children critical skills (such as managing emotions and behaviour, getting along with peers, and solving problems peacefully) that can help them in school, in their families, at the workplace, and throughout their lives. It is particularly relevant to tackle child labour and WFCL because the approach aims at building inner strength and resilience in school-going children at an early age, imbuing them with skills that can counter the “pull” of gang culture. It also seeks to forestall the emergence of deviant behaviors that might result in a vicious cycle of isolation and risk attitudes. While it does not reduce the risk of exposure to vulnerabilities, it empowers children with useful skills to respond to those vulnerabilities.

Schools are increasingly tasked with meeting a broad range of student needs, especially during the middle school years. Fortunately, research shows that universal prevention efforts focused on social and personal skill development can address factors that protect young adolescents and also promote their success. Based on developmental theory and a risk and protective factors framework, the SSP provides students with an opportunity to reflect, talk, and learn about themes such as empathy, communication, and bullying prevention. SSP aims to prevent and reduce risk factors, such as violence, aggression, peer rejection, and early initiation of substance abuse. The methodology used is also oriented to increase protective factors such as social skills and school connectedness. SSP is based on high-interest, interactive lessons to address core competencies and problematic behaviors that have been shown to affect students’ success in school and throughout their lives.

The Programme is also particularly relevant to child labour and WFCL because as it is undertaken within schools and it contributes to strengthening the role of schools as safe environments for children. In the case of Saint Lucia, it is interesting to note that this Programme, unlike in other countries, has been piloted at the primary school level, and not at the secondary school level. This because the Ministry of Education has recognized that in Saint Lucia, the exposure to risk factors occurs as early as primary school.

The intervention was presented as very successful and effective in strengthening children’s inner resilience, skills, and performance in school. Even though the literature has shown that secondary school students are exposed to more behavioural problems, challenges, temptations, and opportunities than any other time in their school career, it is in primary school that they start forging the basis for their inner strengths to those risks and opportunities.

To be more successful, teachers trained in the Programme are advocating to have a dedicated Student Services Officer in each school to be able to coordinate preventive interventions across the age groups, under the supervision of the District Counsellor.

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65 For a general overview of the SSP see [http://www.secondstep.org](http://www.secondstep.org)
Section Six

Recommendations

The Government of Saint Lucia will need to strengthen its legal provisions to fight child labour and the WFCL. The starting point to do so is to ratify all relevant international standards including the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Both are, in fact, important normative tools that will provide strict guidance on national legal provisions to be reviewed or developed.

The several inconsistencies in minimum age provisions, and age limits adopted by different legislations when it comes to defining a child, a young person, a minor or a youth will need careful consideration by the Government and should provide the scope for a harmonization exercise to bring the different legislations up to international standards on child labour and WFCL.

As multi-sectoral coordination is key to maximizing results for preventing child labour and WFCL, the establishment of a cross-sectorial coordinating body under the facilitation and convening role of the Ministry of Labour is also recommended. The Ministry of Labour has in fact, already requested technical assistance to address this particular requirement during the Rapid Assessment. Regional experiences and global good practices on mainstreaming child labour considerations into Government planning and programme execution should also be made available to maximize the impact of high level commitment.

The limited availability, absence, and in some cases, unreliability of existing statistical data on child labour is also due for attention. In Saint Lucia, given the intertwined nature of WFCL with criminal activities, access to informants is a challenge. However, this scoping mission has found grounds to believe that statistical data could be routinely collected from community members in ghetto areas to guide interventions on WFCL and to provide for benchmarking. This could be done by establishing sentinel sites where selected community members will be trained to routinely collect key indicators on WFCL to then be considered for public assistance targeting tools.

Furthermore, if the Saint Lucian society is to be strengthened by investing in human and social capital, the most effective investments, those with the highest returns, should be focussed on the most marginalized communities which show the highest rate of violence and anti-social behaviours. Mainstream perception of ghetto communities has proven to be a challenge for obtaining reliable data and has also led to discrimination by mainstream society against ghetto inhabitants. The notion of “deserving poor” as opposed to “undeserving poor” is an obstacle when targeting most marginalized youth groups through social interventions and explains the scarcity of social intervention programmes being implemented in poor communities where gangs operate. There is unrealized potential for deeper impact through the Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP) but currently it has limited reach which excludes ghetto or gang community members or previously convicted youth. In turn, this has accentuated isolation and fostered more fertile ground for anti-social behaviours.

At this level, the role and capacity of other civil society actors to contribute to the fight against child labour, also warrants consideration and attention. Government partnerships with, and support to, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and other grass-roots movements with
direct access to, and influence in targeted vulnerable areas, could yield rapid results/turnarounds. Financial assistance and capacity-building training for these organizations would not only allow wider access to the marginalized elements, but would also re-introduce elements for the positive forms of “social cohesion” that can counter the spread of the “ghetto culture”, and in turn reduce incidence of WFCL.

Most interventions observed that contribute to reduce child labour and WFCL are of a curative, corrective and reactive nature. Social assistance interventions are provided when children and youth have already experienced recurrent traumas and abuses. To compound matters, punitive programmes aim at punishing or correcting negative behaviors through partial loss of freedom (Boys Training Center or Correctional Detention). This approach is not cost-effective, and does not harvest the best results for children, youth and the society at large. Good practices around the world have pinpointed that only preventive and protective programmes have the potential to maximize results to eradicate child labour and WFCL in a cost-effective manner and without prejudice to children, youth and society. For this reason, a more in-depth assessment of risk and vulnerability factors for youth involved in child labour and WFCL is suggested to be an entry point for the design of integrated prevention and protection policies.

As mentioned, the Rapid Assessment found scope for the creation of strong synergies between combating and eradicating child and WFCL, and the SSNP of Saint Lucia. While the design of the SSNP is skewed towards marginalized and poor households, the connivance among criminality, marginality and poverty, for youth involved in WFCL, complicate their access among the beneficiaries of the SSNP. It has also been noted that while children and youth from single-female headed households are among the most at risk of child labour and WFCL, public assistance programmes in the Caribbean do not usually have any special provision for single parents, resulting in single-headed households being either excluded or under-targeted. Creating viable bridges between the SSNP and the work intended to be undertaken on preventing child labour and WFCL is critical to the very success of both policy priorities. For this to be achieved, specific attention in the use of social safety nets operating modalities that explicitly tackle and correct risks and vulnerabilities that constitute enabling factors to child labour and WFCL, is vital.

In addition to better targeted social programmes, education reform is deemed necessary to re-align school curriculum with the evolving challenges and needs of the Saint Lucian society and labour market. The school system of Saint Lucia is extensively based on academic curriculum that leaves very little space for skills and competencies development as a part of the formal teaching environment. School performance is primarily assessed through marks, attendance and exam outcomes. This approach proved unsuccessful in preparing pupils for workplace or life challenges. Soft skills, as well as social and emotional development skills, including good parenting skills, also have a central role to play in facilitating school-to-work transition, and in preparing youth to face professional challenges and social risks.

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The same Ministry of Education has already identified the revision of continuous assessment tools to monitor the quality of education, the development of positive behavioural management, the strengthening of partnerships among schools and communities, the amelioration of instructional leadership, clinical supervision and management of schools, and the expansion of early childhood education as possible future priorities.

The suggested education reform should also give priority to eliminating barriers for school attendance by poor community members, and to second chance programmes, remedial education, and adult literacy programmes. These interventions are particularly focussed on marginalized youth and their families and should be instrumental in breaking the intergenerational cycle of abuse, neglect, and poverty. They should also directly tackle the problem of drop-out by providing education options more adapted to children who suffered severe neglect, abuse and who are already experiencing affiliations with gangs. Saint Lucia already has some good practices (i.e. the Second Step Programme) that could be reinforced and expanded with the view to achieving the shift required. In fact, a truly preventive approach should focus on younger children’s resilience, and critical life skills should be inculcated through instruction from kindergarten and primary school levels, and then reinforced at the secondary school level.

Weak role models emerged as a critical element that is expediting the recruitment of children into WFCL. Creating positive role models should become a complementary priority to the teaching curriculum, through the creation of peer support groups, extra-curricular/voluntary activities for younger and older siblings, and even through teacher interaction with students and their families.

Successful education reform also requires significant investment in developing teachers’ skills -- both instructional and inter-personal. Teachers appeared ill-equipped to tackle the behavioural problems of marginalized youth. Their lack of support, comprehension, and sometimes empathy has been presented as a precipitating factor for youth to join gangs and enter into WFCL. For the social problems shown by Saint Lucia’s children and youth, schools should be empowered with professional figures that are at the cross-roads between teachers, counsellors and social workers. In the absence of responsible parents, with the failure of community members to care for their children, teachers and schools are a critical counterweight.

This Study also advises action for the reform of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), which emerged as a priority for professionals working with youth, employers, and trade unions. The work undertaken by the NSDC, through its YEP approach, has set an important benchmark for success. This Project has the potential to expand and become a complementary part of the curricula presented to youth at secondary school level and beyond. Skills mismatch and absence of employability skills by youth completing secondary school education has been mentioned as one of the primary causes contributing to youth unemployment and participation in criminal activities. Respondents also reported that some of the youth completing secondary school education were still semi-illiterate. The advantage of undertaking professional and vocational education reforms together is that the approach provides the private sector, especially employers and recruiters, with the opportunity to participate in the design and identification of skills and competencies useful for school-to-work transition with some level of ease.

In closing, the abovementioned reforms must, of course, be undertaken in an appropriate and

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favorable policy context. As the previous Youth Policy of Saint Lucia has been seen as abstract and ambitious, an updated Youth Policy, with a narrower focus on technical and vocational development, skills enhancement for youth, and promotion of employment for youth in general, and marginalized youth in particular, could constitute an attractive, and more concrete alternative for the coming 10 years. However, the Youth Policy Review Project, despite its strategic importance, has not been mentioned by any informants to this Rapid Assessment, nor have participants mentioned the ongoing work done by the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports, Culture and Local Development to improve the policy and programmatic environment for youth. This suggests a disconnect between the ongoing, high-level policy design, and grass-roots, community-based work. While some youth associations have participated in the consultation process for the Youth Policy development, these associations are unlikely to represent youth from ghetto communities or very marginalized backgrounds. For these youth to meaningfully participate, special efforts to allow their participation in the consultation process are deemed necessary.


• 2015. Labour Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean. ISSN 2305-0268. Geneva.

## Annex 1:
### People and Institutions Contacted in Saint Lucia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization and Contact</th>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy & Labour | Hon. Stephenson King, Minister  
Ray Narcisse, Labour Commissioner  
Cornelia Jn. Baptiste, Deputy Labour Commissioner  
George Melchoir, Assistant Labour Commissioner | 1-758-468-3172  
1-758-468-3177 |
| National Productivity Council/Construction & Industrial Equipment Ltd. | Rayneau Gajadhar, Council Chairman & Owner  
Mokesh Gajadhar, Managing Director of CIE | 1-758-454-3047 |
| Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports and Local Government | Julianna Alfred, Permanent Secretary  
Donovan Williams, Permanent Secretary  
Elizabeth Lewis, Director Department of Human Services | 1-758-468-5148  
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