

SITUATION ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN *in* St. Lucia



This Situation Analysis was commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Government of St. Lucia.

UNICEF gratefully acknowledges the work of Paulette Nichols, Consultant, Manitou, Inc.

September 2017

© UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean

UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area
1st Floor, UN House
Marine Gardens
Christ Church
BARBADOS

Tel: 246-467-6000

Fax: 246-436-2812

Email: bridgetown@unicef.org

Website: www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean

www.facebook.com/UNICEFeasterncaribbean

www.youtube.com/UNICEFeastcaribbean



Situation Analysis of Children in St. Lucia

Acknowledgements

The Situation Analysis for St. Lucia is a product of collaborative effort by various stakeholders. UNICEF acknowledges with gratitude the contribution of everyone who participated in the process culminating in this report. The report provides vital information on the realization of children's rights in St. Lucia.

UNICEF would like to thank the following organisations and people for their valuable contributions and insights:

- Government ministries and departments who facilitated consultation meetings and provided valuable information and insights which informed the situation analysis.
- The consultant who gathered quantitative and qualitative information from various sources and analysed them using an equity-focused approach with reference to international commitments made for the realization of children's rights (CRC, MDGs, regional and national development objectives);
- Key stakeholders who were an invaluable source of information including officials from the line ministries, frontline workers (e.g., teachers and school supervisors, health care personnel, social workers, police officers, magistrates, etc.) faith-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations, media.
- UNICEF is also indebted to the children, mothers, fathers, and families;
- UNICEF LACRO team who provided the technical guidance throughout the work, for the conduct of an equity-focused and risk-informed situation analysis;
- UNICEF ECA Programme Team for the technical guidance, technical analysis and peer review of the report;
- The technical writer and graphic artists who contributed to making the report print-ready.

CONTENTS

List of Figures	4
List of Tables	4
Abbreviations	5
Foreword	7
Executive Summary	8
1. Introduction	13
Limitations	17
Structure of the report	17
2. St. Lucia Overview	21
Demographics	23
Migrant population	26
3. The Right to an Adequate	
4. Right to Protection	38
Children in conflict with the law	48
Residential care	52
Foster care and adoption	53
Child trafficking and child labour	54
Birth registration	56
5. The Right to Education	59
Early childhood education	60
Primary education	65
Secondary education	70
Post-secondary and tertiary education	71
Technical and vocational education and training	72
Education for children with special needs	73
Children well-being (violence at school and participation)	74
6. The Right to Health	77
HIV/AIDS	79
Non communicable Diseases	79

7. The SDGs and a New Framework for Children	83
8. Conclusion and Recommendations	84
Legislative and policy framework	84
Survival rights	84
Development rights	84
Protection rights	84
Bibliography	86

List of Figures

Figure 1: Determinants of equity	10
Figure 2: Key stakeholders contributing to the SitAn	11
Figure 3: Map of St. Lucia	14
Figure 4: St. Lucia population age structure	16
Figure 5: Demographic trends	17
Figure 6: Gross national income per capita in US dollars	21
Figure 7: Poverty indicators	23
Figure 8: Poverty trends and disparities	24
Figure 9: 'Learned helplessness'	29
Figure 10: Number of cases of child abuse reported 2010-2015	36
Figure 11: Reported cases of child sexual abuse	37
Figure 12: Number of residents at the Boys Training Center 2014-2016	44
Figure 13: Number of admissions to the New Beginnings Transit Home 2011-2012	46
Figure 14: Number of adoptions granted vs number filed 2006-2016	47
Figure 15: Overview of child trafficking and child labour 2016	48
Figure 16: Birth registration reform	49
Figure 17: Education budget	51
Figure 18: Outreach of the roving caregivers programme from 2004 to 2011	53
Figure 19: Student enrolment and number of teacher from 1996/97 to 2014/15	54
Figure 20: Public primary school enrolment and the unit expenditure per student (in EC\$) by year	56
Figure 21: Healthy connectedness	57
Figure 22: Infant and child mortality	66
Figure 23: Newly diagnosed cases of HIV infection by age and gender	67
Figure 24: Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases	67

List of Tables

Table 1: Human rights and equity focus perspectives	9
Table 2: Internet and mobile phone use	15
Table 3: Children perceived to be vulnerable in St. Lucia	27
Table 4: Legal and policy framework for education	47
Table 5: Number of daycare and preschool centres for 2015/16	50
Table 6: Number of children enrolled in preschool centres by gender and age for 2014/15	50
Table 7: Monitoring indicators for the primary schools from 2008/09 to 2014/15	52
Table 8: Average size, student/teacher ratio, number of teachers, and unit expenditure per student	52
Table 9: Number of repeaters at the primary school level by grade and gender in 2014/15	53
Table 10: Public secondary education indicators from 2008/09 to 2014/15	57

Abbreviations

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CCSLC	Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence
CFS	Child Friendly School
CHA	Community Health Aid
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVQs	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
ECE	Early childhood education
ECCE	Early childhood care and education
ECCHO	Extended Early Childhood Health Outreach
ECD	Early childhood development
EFA	Education For All
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GDP	Gross domestic product
HFLE	Health and family life education
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
MoHE	Ministry of Health and Environment
MPM	Multidimensional poverty measurement
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPLs	Non Performing Loans
NVQs	National Vocational Qualifications
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PTAs	Parent-teacher associations
SALCC	Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SitAn	Situation Analysis
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UWI	University of the West Indies





Situation Analysis of Children in St. Lucia

FOREWORD

The UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area is very pleased to present this Situation Analysis of Children in partnership with the Government of St. Lucia.

Evidence-informed programming is critical not only to our Multi Country Programme of Cooperation with the governments of the Eastern Caribbean Area but to the day-to-day decisions that are needed to determine policy, programme delivery and budget allocation in good governance to focus limited resources to the most critical issues and vulnerable groups. Notwithstanding some obvious gaps in data availability, we see this assessment as an integral contribution to the enhancement of knowledge of children and their families in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

This Situation Analysis of Children in St. Lucia is designed to help government shape national policies and action plans in line with the new Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the international community. It describes the current situation of children, identifies barriers and bottlenecks in advancing children's rights in health, education and child protection and sets forth recommendations.

It was also a critical tool in the preparation of the 2017-2021 UNICEF ECA Multi Country Programme as the identification of the vulnerable segments of the child population sharpened our focus as we designed strategies to support government to respond to the needs all children, but especially those most at risk of multiple deprivations.

This document represents the first time in decades that we have attempted to compile separate updates for each of the 12 countries and territories in the Multi Country Programme. It has been an arduous, but rewarding task, as while there are many similarities between the countries of the Eastern Caribbean Area, some features and situations distinguish one state from the other.

Executive Summary



Introduction

This Situation Analysis (SitAn) of Children in St. Lucia is part of a series being conducted in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean and designed to help governments shape national policies and action plans in-line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It describes the current situation of children in St. Lucia, identifies barriers and bottlenecks in advancing children's rights in health, education and child protection, and sets forth recommendations.

Overview of St. Lucia

St. Lucia is the second largest island of the Windward group in the Lesser Antilles. Located about 24 miles (39 kilometres) south of Martinique and 21 miles northeast of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the 27 mile long island is of volcanic origin. Population estimates indicate that there

are 172,874 residents in 2012, and the population size is slowly rising with a growth rate of less than 1.05 per cent. St. Lucia, an upper-middle income country, is ranked 92 among the 187 countries and territories in the 2016 Human Development Indicators Report published by UNDP. Similar to the OECS members, Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of State who is represented by the Governor General. The prime minister is the head of the party commanding the support of the majority of the members of the House of Assembly. The Constitution guarantees a comprehensive set of fundamental rights and freedoms to which every person in St. Lucia is entitled.

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) conducted a Poverty Assessment Report and a Country Strategy Paper for St. Lucia. These reports revealed that 18.7 per cent of households and 25 per cent of individuals were "poor" based on their reported expenditures for food/non-food items. Living below the poverty line was equated

at US\$156.37 monthly or an annual EC\$ 5,086 in 2005. When compared to data collected around the same time in similar countries in the region (Dominica, Belize, and Suriname, in 2009 for example), the depth and severity of poverty in St. Lucia is not considered substantial. A CDB study released in 2015 identifies an acute unemployment problem for youth (18–24 years), who represent 25 per cent of the population in the Caribbean. The report shows a rate of 25 per cent unemployment among youth compared to 8 per cent among adults, with unemployment among young females (30 per cent) considerably higher than young males (20 per cent).

Methodology

This report is the first comprehensive SitAn of children in St. Lucia focuses on the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups – children of migrant parents, those living with disabilities and those living in remote, single-parented households and poor urban communities. Due to the limitations of available quantitative data, the use of qualitative information is highlighted. The research combined an expansive desk review with over 50 national and global documents, interviews with key stakeholders (32 government and non-government officials) and 34 social and health workers, teachers, children, and their parents, and social workers), focus group discussions with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society and adolescents.

Findings

The number of child abuse cases reported over the period of 2010-2015 totaled 1,341. Sexual abuse was the most common type of reported child abuse, accounting for 34 per cent, of all reported cases. Generally girls account for over 70 per cent of the victims. The 12-16 year old group are most often victims and many of the total cases are incest, as was the case for 29 of the 103 reports in 2014.

St. Lucia created a Child Justice Bill and a

Care and Adoption Bill over a decade ago. The main institutional actors in the juvenile justice sector in St. Lucia are few and, as in most small island settings. During the period of 2012-2014, 446 boys and girls were charged with criminal offences (345 boys and 101 girls) representing just under 50 children charged per capita (100,000). Types of offences include: stealing, assault, wounding, drug related, trespassing, care and protection, and other. The Court Diversion Programme received 63 juvenile (18 and under) referrals from 2011 -2014. There are two residential homes in St. Lucia intended for children in need of care and protection. Saint Lucia has no residential home for girls.

The Government's commitment to education is reflected in the level of education expenditure (pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary and other) over the years relative to GDP: 6.5 per cent in 2009/10; 4.7 per cent in 2013/14; 4.4 per cent in 2014/15. The total number of ECE centres in St. Lucia was 142 in 2014-15 with 42 registered daycare centres in operation, of which half are government-run accommodating 3,342 students 1-4 years old. During the 2014-15 school year, the total enrolment in St. Lucia's 74 primary schools was 15,799 with a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 14:1. In 2014/15, there were 23 public secondary schools with 12,861 students enrolled; a decrease of 2.7 per cent from the previous year. The male dropout rate is higher than that for females, wherein males accounted for approximately 61 per cent of the total dropouts in 2013-2014. It is recognized that Forms 4 and 5 continue to record the highest per centage of dropouts accounting for 70 per cent of the total dropouts.

Two public post-secondary institutions, the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC) and the Vieux-Fort Comprehensive Secondary school, have campuses located in different parts of the island. As per the EFA report, the transition rate from "secondary to post-secondary education is unavailable", however, it is estimated that about 42 per cent of all secondary school graduates transit into a post-secondary institution on the island. One of the challenges still facing TVET and the training of

youth and adults is the absence of written policies. Although in the absence of such documents there exists guidelines governing adult education programmes, it is not sufficient in light of the changing learning needs of individuals.

The official numbers of children with disabilities is documented indicating five different types of disabilities, the number of educators, and the teacher-to-student ratio. The total enrolment in Special Education Centres and mainstreamed into the public system for 2014/15 was 361, of which the highest recorded disability (77 per cent) was learning disabilities, mentally challenged, and autistic followed by multiple handicaps (12 per cent).

Public spending on health was 3.5 per cent of GDP in 2010 for St. Lucia, the equivalent to US\$503 per capita. According to surveys conducted between 1997 and 2010, there were 47 doctors, and 216 nurses and midwives per 100,000 people. Ministry of Health data, provided for the SitAn exercise, shows the infant mortality at 15 (per 1000 live births) and the under-5 child mortality at 18 (per 1000 live births) in 2015. One hundred per cent of births were attended by qualified health staff during 2007-2012 and in 2012, 99 per cent of one-year-olds were immunised with one dose of measles. In 2010 94 per cent of the country's population was using an improved drinking water source and 65 per cent had access to adequate sanitation facilities.

Effort to reduce the incidence of CNCDs are central to the health and nutrition strategy in St. Lucia. In 2012, 83 per cent of deaths among 30-69 year age group were caused by CNCDs. In 2014, less than 10 newly diagnosed cases of HIV were recorded. In the past five years (2010-2015) there has been 0 cases of mother-to-child transmission.

Conclusion

The idea behind the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to create a global movement to advance work on the MDGs towards new commitments. In this sense, nations should

frame their development plans and policies for the next years based on this new globally agreed development agenda.

To maintain an enabling environment conducive to delivering equitable social and economic growth and effective poverty reduction, certain capacities must be put in place or strengthened. These include: mobilizing and channelling resources to the appropriate sectors at the appropriate time for optimal production; enforcing standards and regulations (specifically, operationalizing the legislation and policies identified and/or in draft form); establishing a mix of social partnerships with key actors (local councils, civil society, research institutions, the private sector); and improving systems for generating, collating and managing information so that it is easily accessible and shared across different agencies and with partners.

Recommendations

Legislative and policy framework

- Approve and implement Draft ECD Policy
- Accelerate the final drafting and approval of the four OECS "Model Bills" currently under discussion, including those dealing with juvenile justice and child protection.
- Complete and implement draft regulations for the Status of Children legislation.
- Develop and implement a Juvenile Justice policy that includes guidelines for training of all staff working with juveniles across departments and in residential centres.
- Develop and promote policies that eliminate corporal punishment, keep children in school as well as policies that encourage positive parenting approaches.

Survival rights

- Make greater use of family planning and reduce teenage pregnancies through greater use of Community Health Aids and decentralised health services.

- Develop and implement strategies to combat CNCs and encourage healthy living.
- Development rights
- Invest more in second chance learning opportunities such as TVET and entrepreneurial training that address youth unemployment and contribute to enhancing access and retention of decent work.

Protection rights

- Design and implement formal diversion project based on review of lessons learned from the Court Diversion Programme launched in 2010 but recently discontinued.
- Follow through on the intention to put into operation a residential facility for girls.
- Strengthen the enforcement of the mandatory reporting provisions in the Criminal Code
- Complete and adopt the manual for foster care and adoption procedures.
- Examine the question of adequate human resources for the Foster Care Programme.
- Examine lessons learned from the successes of the “Rectification Fair”

to provide birth registration and correction opportunities

- Facilitate closer collaboration between Probation Department, Human Services and others to practice and promote full and efficient coverage of child protection services

The SDGs and the future

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were officially adopted in September 2015, represent a new framework for global development. The aim is to create a global movement to continue the work begun with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as advance towards new commitments. Nations should therefore start framing their development plans and policies for the next years based on this globally agreed development agenda.

For St. Lucia, that means some strategic changes in terms of producing and using data. Information systems that collate, manage and generate information should be easily accessible and shared across different agencies and with partners to produce evidence-based decisions and a national research agenda that fills the notable gaps in the existing body of knowledge.

1 Introduction



As part of its country programming process, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) assists governments to analyse the situation of children, youth and women. A Situation Analysis (SitAn) of children helps shape national programmes of action for children, UNICEF’s own programmes of assistance and the work of local and external development partners. It not only describes the current situation of children but also identifies and analyses the barriers and bottlenecks that prevent the full realization of their rights related to health, education and child protection. It is part of a process to help ensure that national policies to address the needs of children are on track to achieve the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Two previous SitAns, conducted in the Eastern Caribbean (2007 and 2010), covered the members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in one document; however, a new series of Situation Analyses (SitAns) presents individual reports for each country. Although UNICEF may have initiated and sponsored the process, this SitAn is the result of cooperation between the Fund and St. Lucia and aims to attract as many stakeholders as possible into the process. It is intended to support the Government, civil society and other stakeholders to better understand the situation of girls and boys in St. Lucia, increase national capacity for promoting human

development and consequently contribute to the realization of human rights.

The UNICEF SitAn exercise undertaken in St. Lucia takes a close look at vulnerable children at risk of violence and abuse and children whose rights to education and health are not being respected, protected and fulfilled. Analysis of behaviour and values related to the St. Lucian family/community, traditions and culture helps to better understand how policy, legislation and supply and demand of services impact on the realization of children’s rights. Conditions that are pervasive in upper-middle-income environments – such as social capacity for organization and mobilization and ability to strengthen human capital within the economic and cultural context – are observed in order to assess how they currently affect the well-being of children and women.

In keeping with the UNICEF mandate “to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential”,¹ the SitAn exercise is guided by human rights and equity principles. When applying the rights-based approach, a deliberate focus on equity is fundamental to better understand why the rights of the most marginalized are compromised, who they are and what makes them vulnerable. The table below summarizes the basic features of these two approaches.

1 UNICEF (2003) ‘UNICEF’s Mission Statement’.

Table 1: Human rights and equity focus perspectives

Rights-based approach	Equity-based approach
<p>Definition: Application of human rights principles in child survival, growth, development and participation.</p> <p>Respect, protect, fulfil.</p>	<p>Definition: Application of an equity-focused approach in the realization of child rights.</p> <p>Poorest, most marginalized, deprived of opportunities, etc.</p>
<p>Scope: All children have the right to survive, develop and reach their full potential regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs, income, physical attributes, geographical location or other status.</p>	<p>Scope: All children have equal opportunity to survive, develop and reach full potential without discrimination, bias or favouritism. Focus is on the most marginalized children.</p>
<p>Guiding principles: Accountability, universality, indivisibility and participation. <i>Justice is the overriding theme.</i></p>	<p>Guiding principles: Equity is distinct from equality. <u>Equality</u> requires all to have the same resources, while <u>equity</u> requires all to have equal opportunity to access the same resources.</p> <p>Equity derives from a concept of social justice.</p>
<p>Violations of child rights arise when their basic rights are not realized as per the CRC’s four principles: non-discrimination; best interest of the child; right to survive, grow and develop; and right to participate/be heard.</p> <p>Concept of progressive realization of rights.</p>	<p>Inequities arise when certain population groups are unfairly or unjustly deprived of basic resources that are available to other groups.</p>

At the root of the rights-based approach are the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other core international, regional and domestic human rights instruments. The measurement of progress against these formal obligations is a central benchmark by which to assess the situation of children and women.

Equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential without discrimination, bias or favouritism. This

interpretation is consistent with the CRC, which guarantees the fundamental rights of every child regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs, income, physical attributes, geographical location or other status. Inequities generally arise when certain population groups are unfairly deprived of basic resources that are available to other groups. It is important to emphasize that equity is distinct from equality. Equality requires everyone to have the same resources. Equity requires everyone to have the opportunity to access the same resources. The aim of equity-focused policies is not to eliminate all differences so that everyone has the same level of income, health and education. Rather, the goal is to eliminate the unfair and avoidable circumstances that deprive children of their rights.²

² UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.

Methodology

With a strong equity focus on the most disadvantaged, UNICEF has developed a framework that provides a basis for a holistic analysis of the determinant factors that affect the achievement of child rights as they relate to advocacy, policy analysis and partnership building in an environment of reduced financing. The framework can also assess the quality of and access to services that are available for women and children.

The SitAn seeks to contribute to the development of programmes, policies and strategies that strive to understand and address the root causes of inequity so that all children, particularly those who suffer the worst deprivations in society, have access to education, health care, protection and other services necessary for their survival, growth and development. The framework of the ten determinants³, listed in the figure above, offers an 'equity lens' to examine structural and systemic barriers and bottlenecks to children's rights that often indicate persistent rights-based failures.

Figure 1: Determinants of equity



This SitAn is not only guided by the 10 determinants, but also draws on an extensive desk review, including the examination of a wide range of national and regional development plans, surveys, studies and reports relevant to children.

The complete list of sources used for the quantitative analysis can be found in the bibliography. The existing documentation describing the status of children and women in St. Lucia was useful and current. Uncertainty related to the quality of the data accessed and quoted could be more accurate and this is ubiquitous in all reports that cite statistics from different sources.

3 See Equity monitoring UNICEF (https://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Athens_MoRES_in_Early_Learning_6_June_2012.pdf)

The availability of data for indicators related to inequality, gender, health outcomes and behaviour, child development, nutrition, social and child protection, unemployment and social determinants of poverty are notably reasonable and recent. The MICS of

When programmes, plans and strategies are formulated in the absence of sound analysis, it is difficult to appropriately allocate budgets to attain the goals and objectives needed to realize the rights of children.

Lack of information sharing, as a practice, among government departments, civil society organizations and with the public in general persists as an acute bottleneck to the development of informed opinions on economic and social development in the sub-region. Even where data exist, there is a lack of infrastructure and human resources required for their consistent collection, collation, presentation, and the culture for evidence-based decision-making is embryonic. The SitAn exercise confirmed that information collection and sharing can be highly centralized, often requiring clearance at the Cabinet level before routine sectoral studies, surveys and basic information regarding budget and expenditures can be distributed.

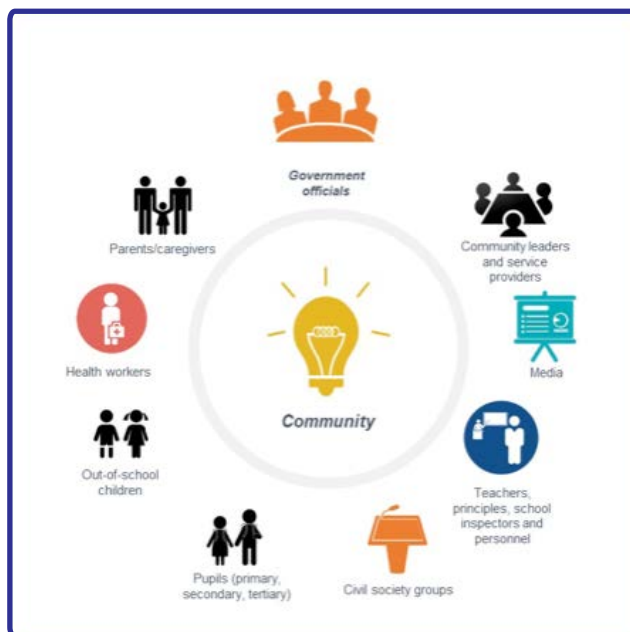
The desk review of information and quantitative data analysis was combined with the voices of children and of a wide range of stakeholders who support children in St. Lucia through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations as illustrated in the figure below. In view of the limited data available from surveys, studies and standard monitoring tables, the combination of this qualitative data was pivotal in understanding the immediate and long-term impact of current policies and programmes on the lives of women and children in the country. A selection of these voices and individual stories are presented throughout the report in text boxes.

Over 50 national and global resource documents were researched and reviewed to help formulate a list of questions used to guide the interviews and focus groups and examine specific issues.

The qualitative sample comprised of multiple key informants, representing the Government, development partners, and civil society, all of whom were asked for their opinions on the status of children. Specifically, there were 32 key informants from ministries, three development partners, eight from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The interviews provided on-the-ground observations and insights from those who experience national level policies and programmes. At the community level, interviewees included teachers (6), health workers (4), and parents/ caregivers (8). The children interviewed came from many different backgrounds: in-school, including those in primary and secondary (12) and out-of-school (4). It was not possible to meet with children living with disabilities or those in police cells or prison. Nonetheless, children came from different backgrounds, and their ages were equally spread between 8 and 18 years. There were slightly more girls (62 per cent) than boys (38 per cent).

The focus group meetings were designed to be informal and took place in meeting rooms of either ministries or directorates of national programmes

Figure 2: Key stakeholders contributing to the SitAn



and took an average of 1.5 to 2 hours. Each person was given a chance to speak and express his or her opinion, and the discussions were recorded using voice recorders and later transcribed. The goal was to have a detailed discussion among social stakeholders and to gain insights into their understanding of issues affecting the achievement of the rights of children from both a duty-bearer and rights-holder perspective.

The first phase of fieldwork for the qualitative research took place from 28 June- 4 July 2016. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in public places by a trained data collector, using a questionnaire prepared for the research. The aim was to identify and define the problem, obtain the thoughts and experiences of the participants and examine how people in both urban and rural settings viewed the problems facing children. It was also expected that participants would give their opinions about the reasons for and solutions to the problems. Although question categories prepared for the quantitative research were the same as for the semi-structured interviews, participants were encouraged to expand on any topic they wished in the hope that more of the insiders' experiences would be explored. The second phase (2 days) of field work was conducted in mid-November, and it was intended that the broadest possible range of stakeholders could participate.

Standard ethical research techniques were used for the discussions with children to avoid making them feel vulnerable and to protect them from any distress. Because the initial exercise took place during the summer break, it was not possible to coordinate discussions with many teachers, counsellors or social workers. Limited discussions with children were therefore arranged at the beach, playgrounds, bus stops and soccer fields.

Once the field data collection exercise was completed, emails were sent out to the different government departments to follow up on requests for data and check for accuracy. Notes and recordings were transcribed and checked for errors and clarity.

As a 'stocktaking' exercise, the status and situation of children in St. Lucia emerging from the SitAn process were presented and discussed at exit meetings attended by government, NGO and UNICEF staff. This was done in two phases: first, the overarching results were presented and discussed at a high-level meeting attended by ministers and permanent secretaries; second, the full report was presented and discussed in plenary. The consultation meeting received attention from high-level officials, mid-level technicians and development practitioners from all sectors. Main findings from this report, including the voices of children, were presented followed by a robust discussion of concrete actions needed to address the issues emerging from the SitAn. The meeting resulted in agreement on short-term and long-term priorities for UNICEF and other key partners to include in programme plans and project designs. This step in the process will go a long way towards encouraging the Government and development partners to consult the SitAn report as a key reference document for programme development when it comes to designing interventions for children in St. Lucia.

Limitations

1. Because the initial fieldwork was carried out during the summer break, reaching the optimal number of pupils, teachers and principals was very difficult.
2. Participants in the semi-structured interviews were mostly from the core stakeholder groups, and comparably fewer parents/caregivers (8) were interviewed.

Structure of the report

After this introductory chapter, the report provides a country overview in Chapter 2, including governance structure, legal framework related to children, demographics and the economy.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 then assess the situation of children relative to the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to be protected (from sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect); the right to education (early childhood

development, primary, secondary and technical vocational and educational training); and the right to health (infant and child mortality, HIV/AIDS, chronic diseases and obesity).

Chapter 7 looks at how the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can accelerate progress for children, and finally Chapter

8 offers concluding remarks and general recommendations.

The report aims to establish the extent of progress towards the realization of the rights of St. Lucia's children and determine the shortfalls with the intention of identifying opportunities to accelerate progress for the country's children.

2 St. Lucia Overview



St. Lucia is the second largest island of the Windward group in the Lesser Antilles. Located about 24 miles (39 kilometres) south of Martinique and 21 miles northeast of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the 27 mile long island is of volcanic origin (see figure below).

St. Lucia, an upper-middle income country, is ranked 92 among the 187 countries and territories in the 2016 Human Development Indicators Report published by UNDP.⁴ 2012 Population estimates indicate that there 172,874 residents on the island, and the ratio of one male to one female (1:1) was observed for most of the age groups.⁵

Figure 3: Map of St. Lucia



- 4 United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2014: Sustaining human progress – Reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience, UNDP, New York, 2014.
- 5 Central Statistics Office (CSO). St. Lucia 2010 Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Report (Updated April 2011), page 7. Estimated 2012 population accessed <http://192.147.231.244:9090/stats/> March 2017.
- 6 Estimation, Levels and Trends in Child Mortality: Report 2015, UNICEF, New York, 2015. https://www.unicef.org/media/files/IGME_Report_Final2.pdf; United Nations Data at: [http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=saintpercent20lucia.](http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=saintpercent20lucia;); and State of The World's Children 2015 Country at: https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/stlucia_statistics.html, accessed 21 March 2017.
- 7 Central Statistics Office, <http://192.147.231.244:9090/stats/index.php/statistics-3/population>, accessed 21 March, 2017.
- 8 Central Statistics Office, <http://192.147.231.244:9090/stats/index.php/labour-force>, accessed March 2017.

Life expectancy level at birth was estimated in 2014 at 75 years with women expected to live slightly longer (74.6) than men (72.2). Ministry of Health data, provided for the SitAn exercise, shows the infant mortality at 15 (per 1000 live births) and the under-5 child mortality at 18 (per 1000 live births) in 2015.⁶

The adolescent fertility rate (teens 15-19 years) rose in 2012 to 23.3 percent from 20.6 percent in 2011.⁷ Unemployment rates continue to be among the highest in the sub-region at just under 25 percent in 2015, and joblessness among young people (aged 15 to 25) is 44 and 39 percent for females and males, respectively.⁸ It is noted that women and young females are most affected. The

Table 2: Internet and mobile phone use

Year	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Internet use (percent)	5.1	21.6	43.3	44.0	45.9	46.2	50.0	52.4
Mobile phone subscribers (percent)	1.6	63.9	111.7	120.8	119.4	116.3	102.6	101.5

proportion of population using improved drinking water sources⁹ in 2012 totaled 99 percent with the two main sources being water piped into dwelling (57 percent) and bottled water (26 percent). The proportion of population using improved sanitation facilities that are not shared totaled 90 percent.¹⁰

The press is free, and discussions and interviews conducted for the SitAn indicate little government interference. The print media consists of weekly publications. There are three privately owned television stations; including one public operating on a cable network. The five privately owned newspapers (which are not published daily) are: (1) the St. Lucia Star (in print and online); (2) the Voice; (3) the Mirror; and (4) One Caribbean; and (5) the Crusader. There are nine radio stations, one AM and seven FM, serving 111,000 radios.

Progression of Internet Use

With a few internet service providers, over 52

9 According to WHO improved drinking water source is defined as “a source that, by nature of its construction, adequately protects the water from outside contamination, in particular from faecal matter. Common examples: piped household water connection, public standpipe, borehole, protected dug well, protected spring, rainwater collection”.

10 Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment and Central Statistics Office and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), ‘Saint Lucia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2012: Final Report’, Castries, Saint Lucia, 2016.

11 Information sourced at: <http://www.pressreference.com/No-Sa/Saint-Lucia.html#ixzz4c5SOCymx>; and the 2016 Human Development Report.

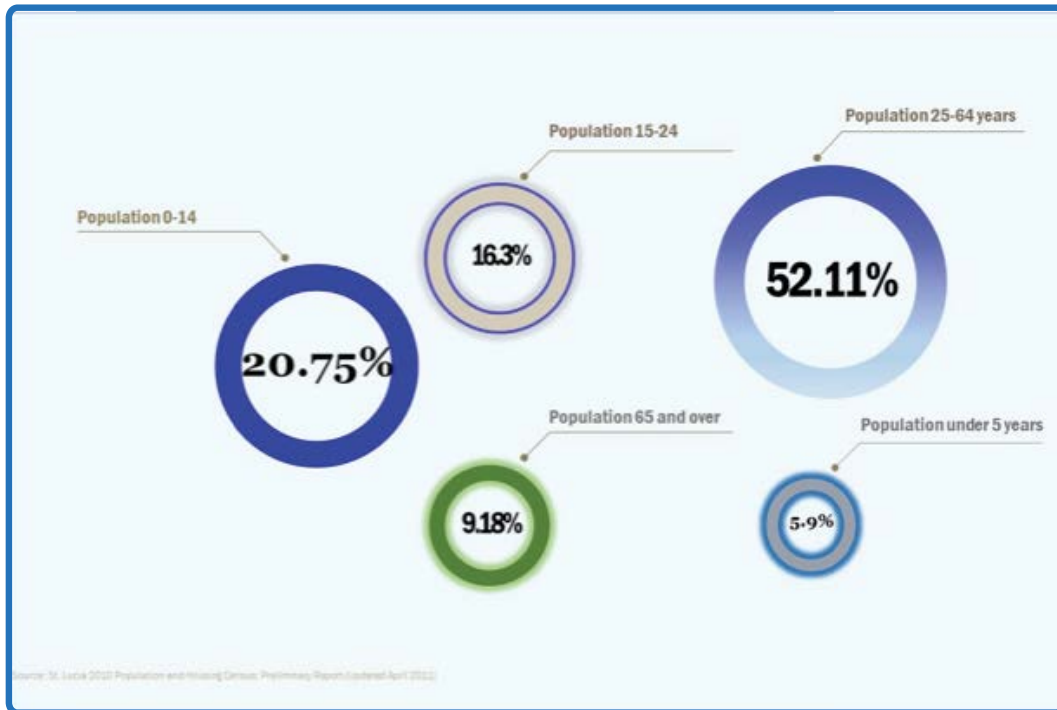
percent of the population uses the internet which, as indicated in the table below, has been systematically increasing, from 22 percent (2005) to 44 percent (2011) to 50 percent in 2014.¹¹ The number of mobile phone subscribers is over one hundred percent, indicating that some individuals may have more than one mobile phone. This trend spiked to 121 percent (in 2011) and remained stable around 102 percent (in 2014).

In spite of this notable progress, however, urban-rural disparities continue to persist. For example, rural populations are much more likely to be affected by poverty compared to the urban population.

Governance

With the results from general elections held in St. Lucia on 6 June 2016, the United Workers Party experienced a victory, winning the majority of the seats. On 7 June 2016, United Workers Party leader, Mr. Allen Chastanet, was sworn in as Prime Minister. The other two political parties are the Lucian People’s Movement and the St. Lucia Labour Party. Similar to the OECS members, Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of State who is represented by the Governor General. The prime minister is the head of the party commanding the support of the majority of the members of the House of Assembly. Three political parties participated in the 6 June 2016 General Election. Allen Chastanet of the United Workers Party won eleven of the seventeen seats. The other chamber of Parliament, the Senate, has 11 appointed members.

Figure 4: St. Lucia population age structure



There are 10 parishes, which serve as administrative divisions for the national Government. Village and town councils play a pivotal role, wherein local government officials oversee the regulation of sanitation and maintenance of cemeteries and secondary roads. This structure values community participation in the identification, planning, implementation and management of development activities.

None of the councils are fully autonomous but draw their authority and responsibilities from the Government. The councils receive

annual government grants, allocations for basic expenditures but also the possibility to join forces with other community- and faith-based organizations to leverage scarce locally available resources and expertise. The Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports and Culture, and Local Government holds the responsibility for the promotion of the concept of local government, educating councillors and members of the public on the duties and functions of local authorities and the oversight of the use of funds (usually based upon request).

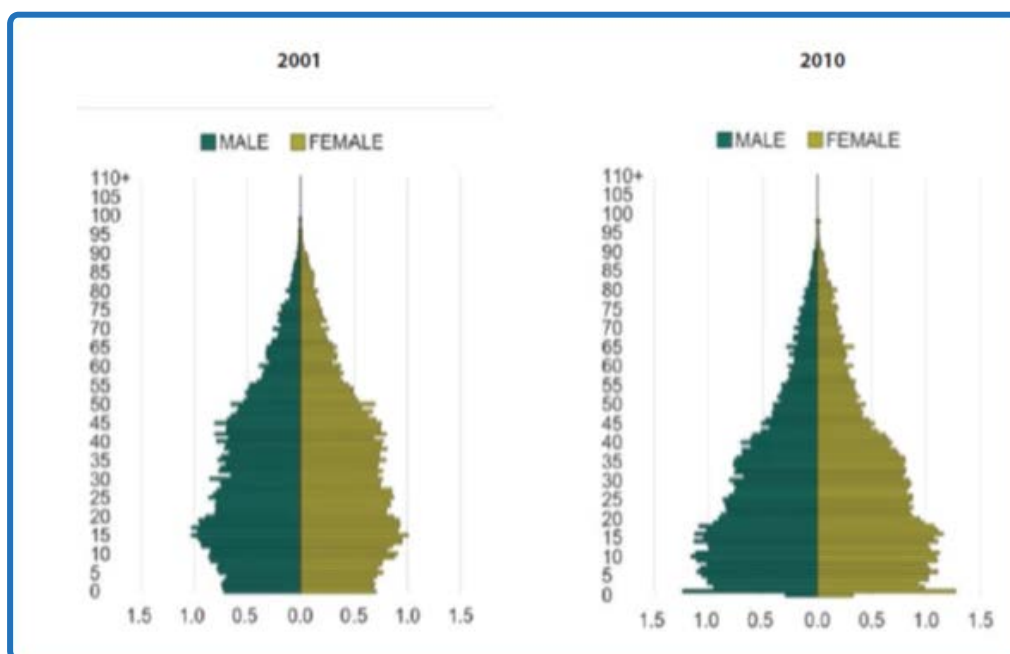
Demographics

Population estimates indicate that there are 172,547 residents in 2012, and the population size is slowly rising with a growth rate of less than 1.05 per cent.¹² The figure below outlines the population age structure, where an estimated 21 percent of the population is under the age of 14 and 16 per cent between ages 15 to 24. This may be considered a 'youth bulge'.¹³

12 Central Statistics Office (CSO). St. Lucia 2010 Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Report (Updated April 2011), page 7. 2012 estimates accessed <http://192.147.231.244:9090/stats/index.php/statistics-3/population> in March 2017

13 The total dependency ratio is 47 percent measured by the number of children under the age of 15 and adults over the age of 65 compared to the working population ages 15-64. The potential support ratio 7.5 percent, shows the ratio of working adults per one aging adult. The world average is 7.9 percent. Source from Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook, 2015.

Figure 5: Demographic trends



According to the estimates produced by the St. Lucia Central Statistics Office (CSO), this youth bulge has expanded greatly between 2001 and 2010 as indicated in the figure.¹⁴

There is also an increasingly aging population over 65 years (9.18 per cent). Demographic trends that favour the young and old can put pressure on the public sector in areas such as health, education and social safety nets.¹⁵

People of working age (25–64 years) are estimated at 52 per cent of the population and their numbers also increased from 2001 to 2011.

The expansion of the working age population has resulted in an 18 per cent increase in the size of

St. Lucia’s workforce.¹⁶ The CSO’s projections in population statistics indicate that this positive growth trend will continue over the next decade. Though a growing labour force may be an asset for income generation and economic growth, the capacity of the economy to absorb these incoming entrants is even more critical. Since 2008, however, employment data and interview findings suggest that the unemployment rate has been steadily increasing for people of working-age. One conclusive study summarized the situation as, “two of every three individuals who entered the workforce between 2009 and 2013 were unable to find jobs”.¹⁷ As a result, the outward migration is high with a migrant stock of 43,687 individuals. This places a strain on the economy by causing “brain drain”, where a country invests in educating its young people and they seek work elsewhere. It also can put pressure on elderly care services when adult children are not present to care for their aging parents.¹⁸

St. Lucia’s population is evenly divided between urban and rural areas, although the Castries parish has the highest concentration of the population, containing roughly 39 per cent of the population (estimated 65,656 residents).¹⁹

14 Central Statistics Office (CSO). St. Lucia 2010 Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Report (Updated April 2011).
 15 Ibid.
 16 Gimenez, Lea; St. Catherine, Edwin; Karver, Jonathan; Odawara, Rei. 2015. The Aftermath of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis in the Eastern Caribbean : The Impact on the St Lucia Labor Market. World Bank Group, Washington, DC, page 15.
 17 Ibid, page 15.
 18 UNICEF, Migration Profiles, page 2.
 19 Central Statistics Office (CSO). St. Lucia 2010 Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Report (Updated April 2011), (table 7).

The majority of St. Lucians are Christians, including Roman Catholic (61.5 percent), Protestant (25.5 percent), Seventh Day Adventist (10.4 percent), Pentecostal (8.9 percent), and Jehovah's Witnesses (1.2 percent), among others. Rastafarians make up 1.9 per cent, other 0.4 per cent, 'none' 5.9 per cent and unspecified 1.4 per cent.²⁰ The 2010 population estimates indicate that St. Lucia's ethnic make-up is: 85.3 percent black/African descent, 10.9 percent mixed, 2.2 percent East Indian, 1.6 percent other, and less than one percent as unspecified.

Legal framework related to children

The legislative framework for child protection in St. Lucia is grounded in international and regional conventions and universal systems of rules that govern and regulate decision-making, agreements and laws concerning children.

National laws and policies

The Constitution guarantees a comprehensive set of fundamental rights and freedoms to which every person in St. Lucia is entitled.

The key national policies, laws and programmes are:

- Constitution of St. Lucia
- The Children and Young Persons Act (revised 2001)
- The Family Court Act (revised 1994, 2001)
- The Earning Act, 1996
- The Criminal Code of 1957 (revised 1992 and 2003)
- The Domestic Violence Act of 1995 (revised 2005)
- The Protocol for the Management of Child Abuse and Neglect in St. Lucia (draft 2008)
- The Counter Trafficking Act, 2010

²⁰ Central Statistics Office (CSO). St. Lucia 2010 Population and Housing Census data.

²¹ UNICEF 2011.

- The Education Act, 1999 (revised in 2001)
- Separation and Maintenance Act, 1956
- The Anti-gang Act, 2014
- The Adoption Act, 1989
- The Affiliation Act, 1955

International agreements and conventions

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a 'child' as "a person below the age of 18". The CRC, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18. The Children and Young Persons Act requires revisions to fully comply with the safeguards and principles set forth in the CRC for the protection of the rights of the child. The Government's initial report was presented to the Committee on the CRC in October of 2003.

Girls' and women's right to be treated equally with boys and men is also set out in CEDAW. Both the CRC and CEDAW highlight that girls have a right to education, health and nationality; all forms of violence against girls and women, such as trafficking and prostitution, must end; discrimination and being treated unfairly because of being a girl must end; both parents are responsible for raising their children; play, rest and leisure are important for all children; and governments must do all they can to make sure girls' rights are protected.²¹

Other conventions and covenants that directly impact on children include:

- MDGs and recommitment to child protection through the Sustainable Development Goals
- CRC (ratified 1993)
- CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (ratified)
- CEDAW (ratified 1982)
- Palermo Protocol (ratified)
- ILO C138 (ratified), 182 (ratified)
- CRPD (signed, 2011)

Migrant population

Migration is a vital element in the history of the Caribbean. There are three primary migration flows: (i) internal migration (e.g., from rural areas to a city); (ii) intra-regional migration (movement among islands); and (iii) outward migration (e.g., to Latin America, Europe or North America). Three of the most important factors influencing these flows are socio-economic inequalities (both within the Caribbean and globally), tourism and human trafficking. It is important to note that the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), signed in 1989, and the 2011 OECS Revised Treaty of Basseterre established a political and legal framework for the intra-regional movement of skills, labour and travel. The intent was to harmonize access to social services, provide for the transfer of social security and setting common standards and measures for accreditation and equivalency.²² As the free movement of labour is a critical aspect of the region's development strategy, both legitimate and illicit migratory flows have resulted in the region.

The estimated net migration rate for St. Lucia is 0.04 (per 1,000 population). Foreign born residents are mainly from neighbouring countries, including Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago. Extra-regional foreign-born residents are from the United States and the United Kingdom.

The economy

Following the 2008 global financial crisis – with sharp decreases in flows from official development, tourism, remittances and foreign direct investment (FDI) – economic recovery in the Caribbean continues to be sluggish. Regional experts estimate that the aggregate sub-region economy is not likely to return to pre-crisis growth levels before 2016–2017 or later.²³

Research on the ideal environment to sustain increases in per capita GDP shows a direct correlation with five key drivers of economic and social growth: (i) macroeconomic stability; (ii) high levels of investment, including both human capital and infrastructure; (iii) enhancements in productivity; (iv) openness to ideas, technology and capital; and (v) effective institutions. Similar to other OECS members, St. Lucia is beleaguered by small domestic markets that constrain efficiency and growth of the private sector; limited product diversification, increasing both the risk and the return that can be derived from economic activity; and scale diseconomies in public service provision.

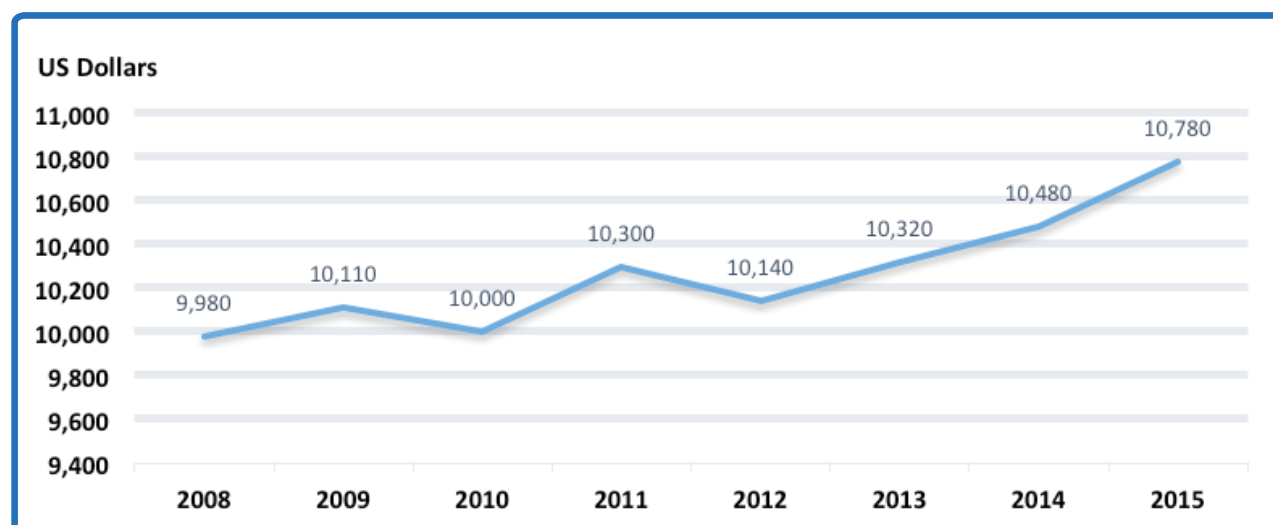
St. Lucia's economy grew an average of 1.9 percent during from 2000 to 2007, achieving notable real growth. The country's private sector (tourism-related) construction activity, small-scale manufacturing, and the agricultural industries (banana) contributed to these positive economic trends in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, the global financial crisis, which occurred from 2008 onwards and natural calamities, led to reduced growth, unemployment, and less expenditures available for social services. The sharp decline in tourism demands from wealthier economies, which in turn reduced the flow of FDIs and financial services activities, caused a chain of events which continue to affect the performance of the economy today.

When the region was unable to attract the same number of visitors, St. Lucia's tourism industries suffered. As St. Lucia's dependency on tourism accounted for 40 percent of the economy, or a major source of foreign income, the dramatic fall of this expected tourism capital not only forced delinquency rates to spike, but also caused a major decline in employment. Before the crisis, there was a high level of private sector construction activity financed as part of tourism-related loans. The goal was to upgrade the country's tourism assets in order to improve its comparative competitiveness. In the post-crisis period the construction sector has suffered greatly. Non Performing Loans (NPLs), used to finance investment projects, rose from 15.5 percent in

²² See the CARICOM and OECS websites.

²³ Inter-American Development Bank 2013.

Figure 6: Gross national income per capita in US dollars



2012 to approximately 22 percent in November 2013. With the sharp decline in tourism, however, the numbers of delinquencies rose, curtailing the private sector's access to credit. Banks increased loan loss provisions and became very selective about lending.²⁴

With less capital available to finance new initiatives in the tourism sector, it became more difficult for this sector to recover. The other major industries, which include agriculture, agribusiness, and manufacturing, also experienced shrinking revenues. In 2009, the Windward Islands' guaranteed fixed share of the European banana market was abolished, creating a dramatic fall in revenue from this traditional export crop. The effects of these economic shocks were compounded even more with several natural disasters and extreme weather events

(i.e., Hurricane Matthew-2016, "the Christmas Rains"-2015, Hurricane Tomas-2010, and Hurricane Ivan-2004) which took place. In 2012, the overall deficit rose to 9.3 percent of GDP, and the primary deficit to 5.8 percent.²⁵

While the proportion of the unemployed stood at just over 15 percent of working age (15 to 64 years of age) individuals in 2008, it increased gradually to a high of just below 24 percent in 2013 (an increase of nearly 9 percentage points). A labour force survey concluded that the impact of the crisis varied by gender and education.²⁶ Female employment shifted from professional services to the education, health, and social services sector, whereas male employment flowed from construction to the trade sector. Those who were more educated also shifted to the education sector, and those who were less educated moved out of the agricultural sector into the trade sector. In sum, there have been fewer opportunities in traditional foreign income-earning sectors (e.g., tourism, small-scale manufacturing, and agriculture), and so there is a higher concentration of labour force participation in the trade and social services sectors. Whilst per capita income in the region declined on average by 4.5 per cent, from around US\$9,200 in 2008 to US\$8,800 in 2012, it increased in St. Lucia by more than six per cent over the same time period (see figure below).²⁷

24 Gimenez, Lea; St. Catherine, Edwin; Karver, Jonathan; Odawara, Rei. 2015. The Aftermath of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis in the Eastern Caribbean : The Impact on the St. Lucia Labor Market. World Bank Group, Washington, DC, page 15.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 The estimates for the gross national income (GNI) per capita, based on purchasing power parity, were sourced from the World Bank at: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/st-lucia>.

The interaction among macroeconomic stability, public sector debt and real GDP growth is complex but a common understanding is that a large debt overhang is correlated with slower growth, although causality could run both ways. While St. Lucia's total public debt, at the end of FY 2011/12, was approximately 64.2 percent of GDP,²⁸ at EC\$2,787.0 million (as of the 2015 Budget Statement), the debt to GDP ratio is 73.5 percent (2015) which is slightly lower than that for 2013.²⁹

In September 2015, experts forecasted positive economic growth generally for the Eastern Caribbean, with expectations for accelerated

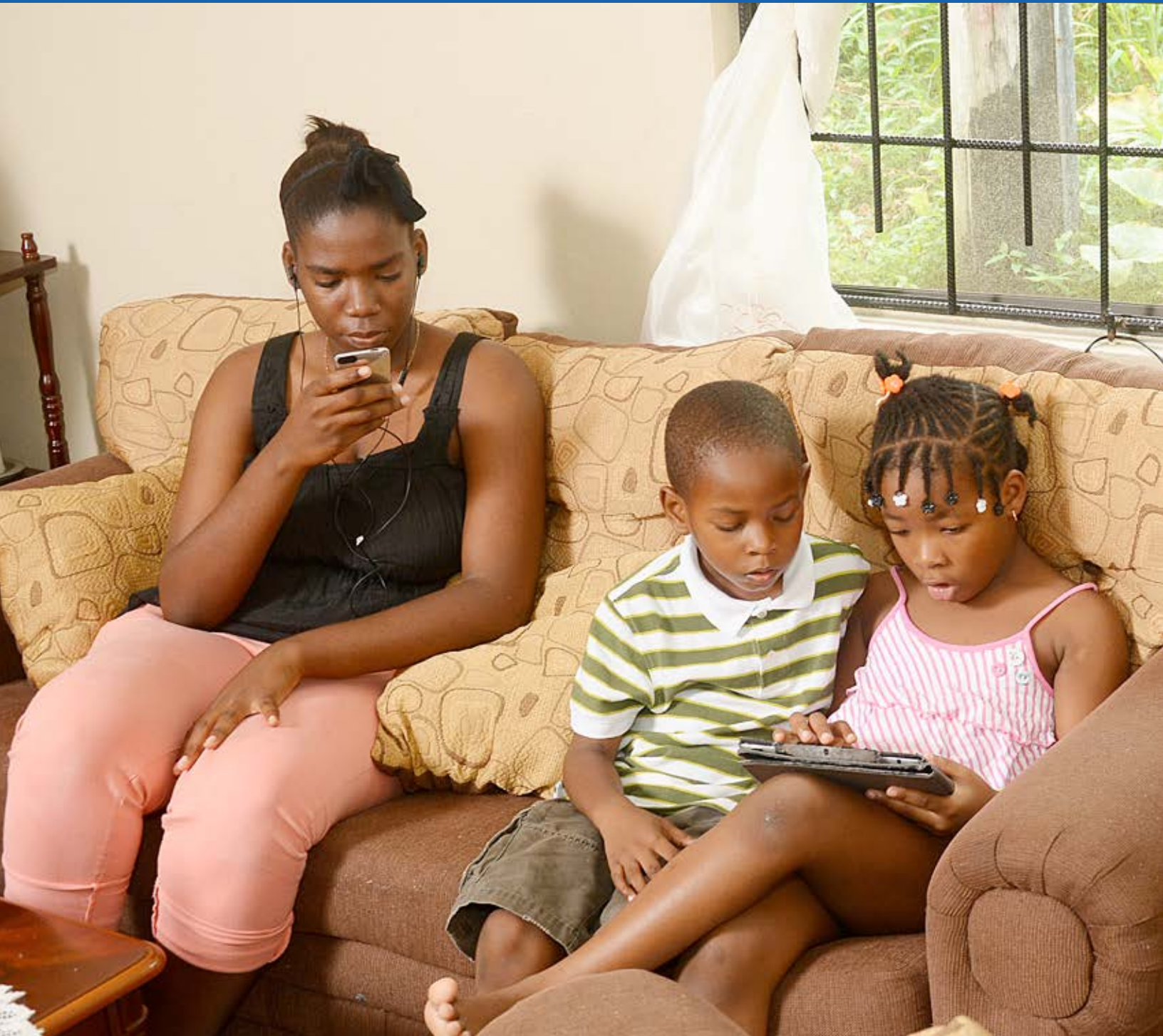
growth over the medium term. "Assuming no significant downturn in the global economy; particularly in source markets, improved performance in excess of 4 percent is projected in both Turks and Caicos and St. Kitts and Nevis, as tourism and related investments remain buoyant. These activities will also drive advances in many OECS", including St. Lucia.³⁰ However, capitalizing on this trend in terms of sustaining progress and achievements towards the SDGs may prove difficult with high unemployment rates (particularly among women and youth), persistent poverty among the rural population and increased dependency on the tourism industry.

28 CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), Country Strategy Paper: St. Lucia 2013-16, page ii.

29 Government of St. Lucia, Budget Statement from the Ministry of Finance, May 2015.

30 CDB, Country Strategy Paper: St. Lucia 2013-16; CDB, Annual Report: 2015, page 17; CDB, Poverty Assessment Report: St. Lucia, prepared by Kairi Consultants Ltd., page 2.

3 The Right to an Adequate Standard of Living



Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families and guardians who cannot afford to provide this, particularly with regard to food, clothing and housing (CRC, article 27)

The lives of children are overwhelmingly more affected than those of adults by the discrimination and marginalization they endure as a result of deprivation and poverty. The shame, abuse, psychological stress, exclusion and stigma they experience diminish their self-esteem, confidence and ability to function socially, often leaving psychological footprints deeply affecting their personal growth and development. When examining the patterns and drivers of the lives of children living in poverty, a rights-based approach grounded in the four core principles of the CRC is imperative: the right to life, survival, and development; non-discrimination; consideration of the best interests of the child; and respect for the views of the child. In keeping with the CRC and other key human rights instruments, the framework for poverty analysis should look beyond economic deprivations towards persistent inequalities that are likely to underpin the causes.

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) conducted a Poverty Assessment Report and a Country Strategy Paper for St. Lucia. These reports revealed that 18.7 percent of households and 25 percent of individuals were “poor” based on their reported expenditures for food/non-food items. Living below the poverty line was equated

at US\$156.37 monthly or an annual EC\$ 5,086 in 2005.³¹

Looking at data, regarding the poverty gap or how far, the poor are from that poverty line, the report noted that “5.3 percent of households and 7.1 percent of the population were indigent”, or so poor that their expenditures were inadequate to cover their dietary requirements.³² When compared to data collected around the same time in similar countries in the region (Dominica, Belize, and Surinam, in 2009 for example), the depth and severity of poverty in St. Lucia is not considered substantial. However, the accuracy of poverty analysis, including understanding of income poverty, has been compromised by difficulties in comparing estimates and the use of different sources and methodologies for data produced prior to the Poverty Assessment Report.

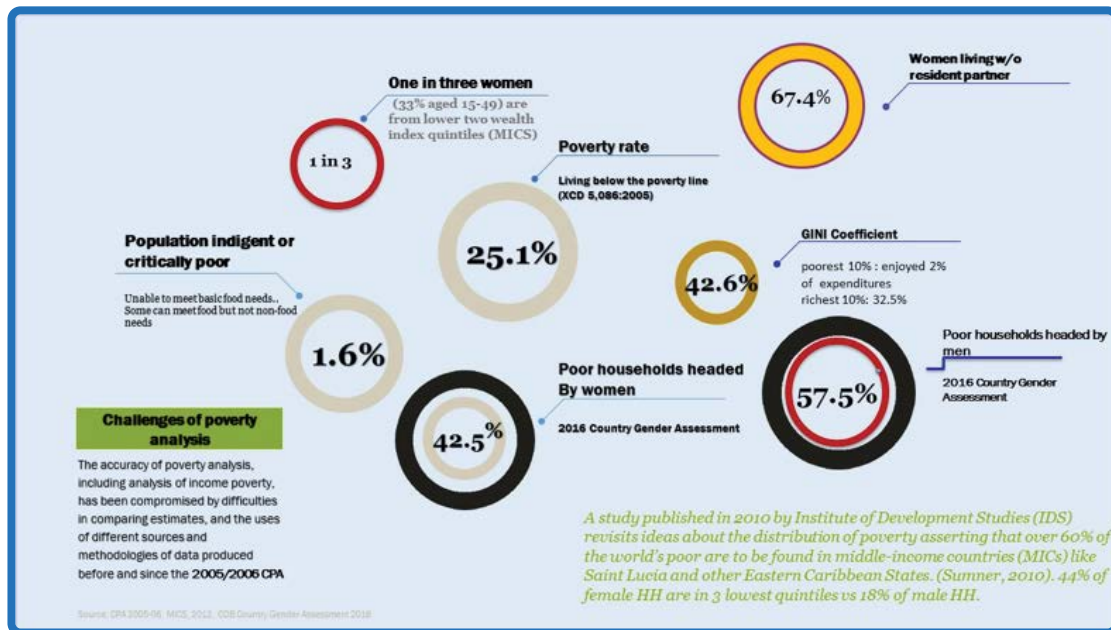
The figure below presents several poverty indicators. For example, the Gini coefficient, which measures the degree of expenditure inequality, stood at 0.43. When compared to that of 1995 (0.36), the data indicates a slight increase in the inequality index. Because women are over-represented in lower income brackets in addition to having higher representation among the population that is economically inactive, they are consequently more affected by poverty than men. There were 42.5 percent of households headed by women who fall within the bottom two wealth quintiles.³³ These households also tend to include the following characteristics: higher average

31 CDB, Poverty Assessment Report: St. Lucia, prepared by Kairi Consultants Ltd., pages 8-9.

32 Ibid.

33 UNICEF, Mapping of Child Well-being in St. Lucia, page 7.

Figure 7: Poverty indicators



household size (where there are 2.7 children in the lowest quintile compared to 0.7 in the highest quintile)³⁴ and a high dependency ratio.³⁵ The Mapping of Child Well-being in St. Lucia Study informs that “children from households with a female head are concentrated in the second and middle quintiles, while the distribution of wealth among children from male-headed households is more polarized with larger shares of children in the two ends of the wealth ranking. When it comes to children’s age group, the 5 to 11-year-old group seems to be more concentrated in the bottom quintile. Children in households with five or more members are also clearly worse-off than those living in smaller households. Children living with

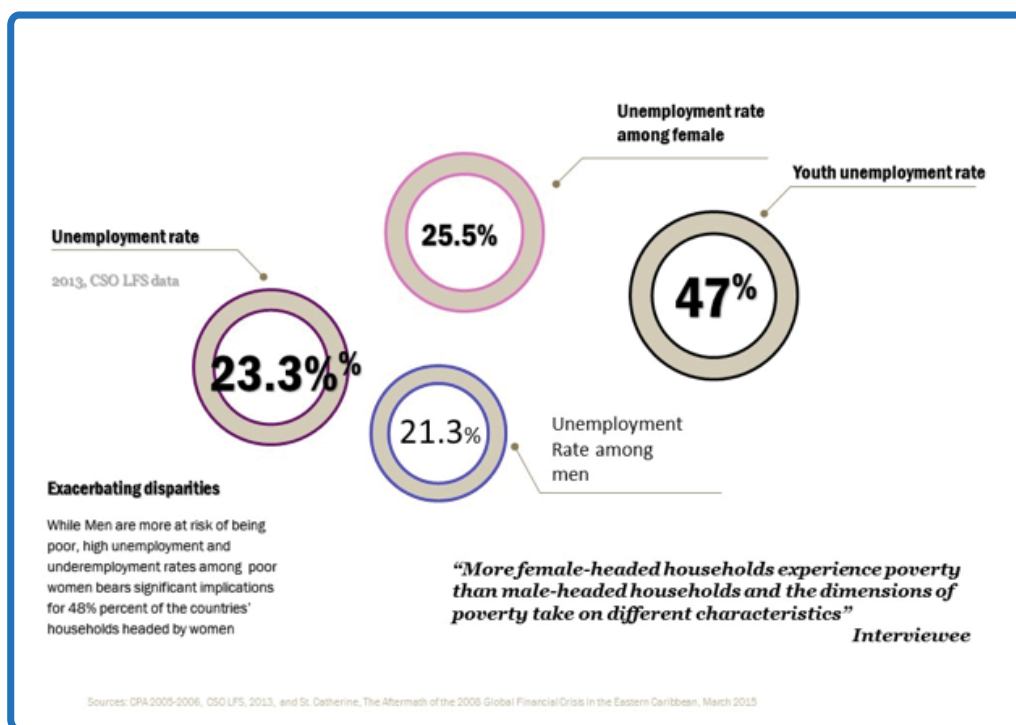
a single adult are also noticeably concentrated in the lower part of wealth distribution.”³⁶

When examining trends and disparities, a focus on the employment-poverty link is essential, and it is important to highlight that labour force participation is largely determined by economic conditions as well as the social and cultural context (see figure below). St. Lucia, as with most countries in the sub-region, continues to struggle with lingering weaknesses in the financial, labour and housing markets, as the repercussions from the 2008 global financial and economic crisis persist (see section above on the economy for details).

There was a slight growth in the labour force estimated from 67,704 (2010) to 102,000 (2015). Two different parts of the private/trade sectors, “wholesale and retail trade” and “accommodation and food service activities”, employed the majority of the workforce followed by the agricultural sector. As noted earlier, after the crisis, there

34 CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), Poverty Assessment Report: St. Lucia, prepared by Kairi Consultants Ltd., page 9.
35 UNICEF, Mapping of Child Well-being in St. Lucia, page 8.
36 Ibid.

Figure 8: Poverty trends and disparities



was an observed shift in employment from the tourism sector into the trade services industries. Labour force participation by gender appeared to fluctuate over the years.³⁷

While World Bank Enterprise Surveys (WBES), in general, stress the importance of an adequately trained labour force and high participation rate of women in the workforce as key determinants for private sector business development as well as a generally healthy economy, gender disproportionately affects the likelihood and quality of employment in St. Lucia. The Country Gender Assessment cited a “gender segregation in employment in St. Lucia”, where males predominate in agriculture, forestry and fishing;

construction; manufacturing; and transportation and storage. Females, on the other hand, predominate in wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; accommodation and food service; public administration, and defense.³⁸ Although slightly more women than men are employed, women occupy mainly low-paying jobs (concentrated in the informal sector) with low skill requirements and high staff turnover rates.

Many of the employed live in households whose income or consumption levels fall below the poverty level threshold, and they therefore spend considerable time looking for better paying jobs. This group, categorized as the ‘working poor’, is generally clustered in the 25–44 age group, works in the informal sector and is more or less economically depressed, disenfranchised and marginalized. For the poor single-female headed household, the informal economy is an important contributor to survival, as formal sector employment often does not afford flexibility required to care for dependents.

37 Key Results from the 2010 St Lucia Population and Housing Census 2010 - Implications of Quality Control, speech presented by Edwin St Catherine, Director of Statistics.

38 CDB, Country Gender assessment, St. Lucia, Prepared by Aleah N. Ranjitsingh with Rawwida Baksh and Associates, January 2016, page 15.

A CDB study released in 2015 identifies an acute unemployment problem for youth (18–24 years), who represent 25 per cent of the population in the Caribbean. The report shows a rate of 25 per cent unemployment among youth compared to 8 per cent among adults, with unemployment among young females (30 per cent) considerably higher than young males (20 per cent).³⁹

A study published in 2010 by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) revisits ideas about the distribution of poverty, asserting that over 60 per cent of the world's poor are to be found in middle- and upper-income countries such as St. Lucia and other Eastern Caribbean States. These countries contain many of the standard characteristics of rural poverty at significant national levels. To understand and properly treat the rural poverty situation requires a focus on different and more indicative factors that go beyond per capita GDP, including the level of economic growth, the fiscal ability of governments to effectively address economic and social development issues using own-generated resources, and the percentage of the population living in rural areas.

Government, in partnership with NGOs and international agencies, continues its commitment to delivering equitable and quality social services for sustainable development, particularly to the vulnerable and marginalized. Poverty clearly constitutes a multidimensional phenomenon that invades all aspects of the lives of individuals, families and communities, as noted in a comprehensive study published in 2001 by the World Bank. When the poor in 23 countries were asked about their views on poverty, the voices indicated that it is not simply the absence or lack of specific goods but is a combination of a number of deficiencies coupled with powerlessness that affects their ability to bargain and defend themselves and their families across the spectrum of social, cultural and economic domains. Their

responses project a combination of a sense of dependence, insecurity, anxiety, impotence, inability, inferiority and ill treatment.

When examined from a human rights and equity perspective, poverty analysis uncovers issues of injustice, exclusion, lack of opportunities, poor quality social services, chronic health challenges and physical disabilities. Those interviewed gave the clear message that poverty also includes the experience of psychological deprivation and frequent exposure to high risk, vulnerable and borderline situations (living in substandard housing, drug and alcohol abuse, crime and violence). Nearly all of those interviewed for the SitAn exercise agreed that poverty in St. Lucia is “passed on from one generation to another” and that children and adolescents, especially girls, are the most vulnerable.

As noted earlier, women generally support larger households than men, and they are more at risk of becoming or remaining poor, carrying greater responsibilities for caring for and the maintenance of the family. These poor households tend to have four or more children in addition to one or two extended family members, including other unemployed working-age adults. The inequalities associated with the negative consequences of the low status of women in society can result in little support from intra-family relationships, largely dominated by males. These households are also characterized by low levels of education, low school attendance rates among the children living in the household, children fathered by multiple men, inadequate adult guidance and support for children, and limited access to basic health care. Most men engaging with female-headed households prefer a ‘visiting relationship’, leaving parenting to the woman. Many poor women living in this scenario resort to survival strategies that can often include illegal activities and/or transactional sex.

Typically, these poor households headed by single women represent prime conditions for inter-generational poverty to take hold, promoting a “learned helplessness” (see Figure 9). Sexual and gender-based violence and drug and alcohol

³⁹ Youth are the Future: The Imperative of Youth Employment for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean, May 2015, CDB.

abuse are more likely to occur in these households as opposed to non-poor households with common-law or married couples. Dysfunctional mating patterns and early pregnancies often lead to the girl child repeating the cycle of poverty that trapped the single mother heading the household. The male child can also get caught in this poverty trap (as will be evidenced in the right to education chapter), often dropping out of school to bring more income into the household and potentially falling into gang activity and the drug trade.

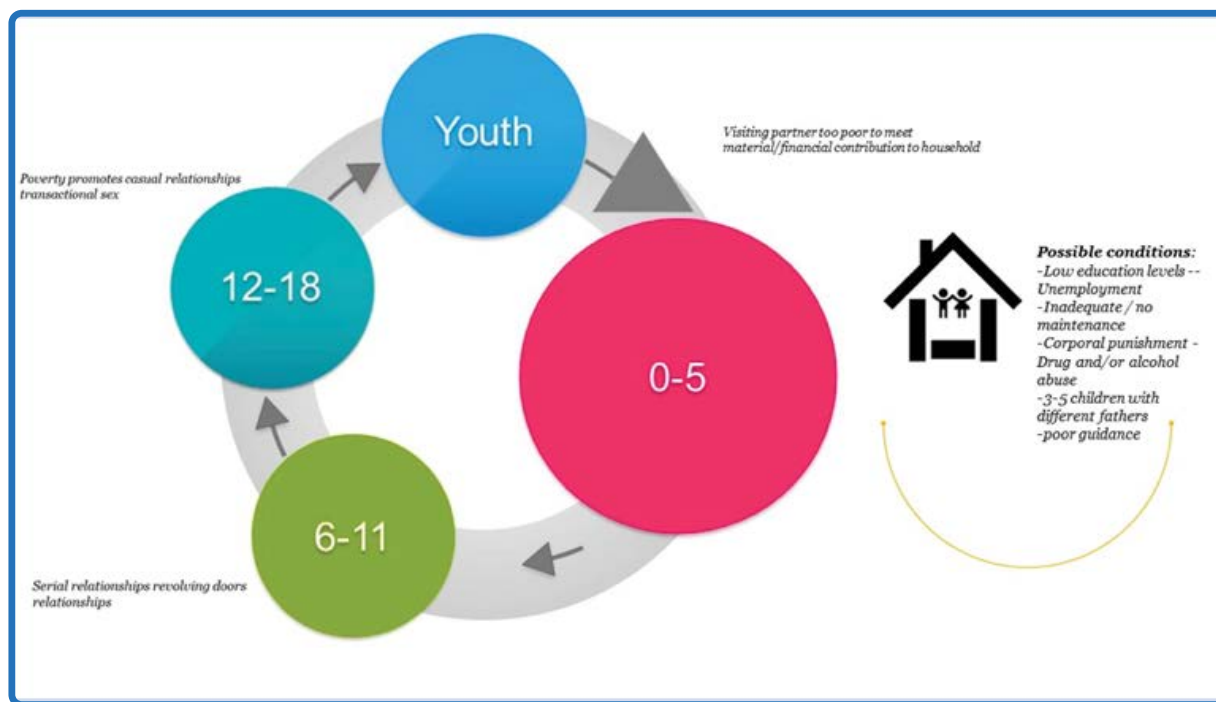
Poverty promotes casual or dysfunctional relationships as single women pursue partners who can bring monetary contributions to the household, evolving into 'revolving door hook-ups'

and transactional sex. As the cycle continues, the female changes partners in pursuit of material and financial gain and the chances of pregnancy increase, adding to the already overwhelming responsibilities of the growing household.

Children in these households are affected by these conditions in different ways depending on their age and sex, with consequences often leading to exposure to vulnerabilities, many of which have far-reaching negative consequences on their growth, development, survival, protection and capacity to express themselves. The perceptions of vulnerabilities facing these children as discussed in the interviews and focus group discussions are shown in the table below.

Figure 9: 'Learned helplessness'

Children perceived as vulnerable in St. Lucia⁴⁰



40 Background paper on the status of juvenile justice in the OECS and other specified Caribbean countries, October 2015; UNICEF, 2015; and Central Statistics Office (CSO). St. Lucia 2010 Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Report (Updated April 2011).

Children perceived as vulnerable in St. Lucia⁴⁰

Children needing protection in St. Lucia	What makes them vulnerable (risk factors)	How vulnerability is manifested (outcomes)
<p>Particularly vulnerable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children living in poor female-headed households engaged in serial relationships • 48 percent of households headed by women with 3 or more children 		
<p><u>Children (0-5)</u> Less than 8,500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and emotional neglect • Abusive families. Malnutrition. • Harmful consequences difficult reversible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmful behavioral patterns • Slow cognitive development • Malnutrition • Poor socialisation process
<p><u>Adolescent girls and boys (15-19)</u> 13,900 (2015) with slightly more girls than boys.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigence, poverty and vulnerability • Emotional and educational underperformance • Dysfunctional and/or violent families and/or communities • Risky behaviours • Ineffective schools • Ineffective legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teen pregnancy, unemployment, marginalisation, non-participation • Girls at risk of sexual violence, abuse. Boys at risk to dropout from school without certificate. Both at risk to engaging in harmful behaviours and practices (drugs, crime, gangs as perpetrators and victims) • This group represents a major opportunity for future of St. Lucia • Early marriage
<p><u>Children in residential care centres</u> Removal of children from their biological homes sometimes for protection and care Five residential Care facilities in St. Lucia (one centres -boys only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing connectedness to family and community. • Ineffective legislation and/or regulation • Stigma • Low awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigmatisation • School drop out • Poor socialisation process

Children perceived as vulnerable in St. Lucia⁴⁰

Children needing protection in St. Lucia	What makes them vulnerable (risk factors)	How vulnerability is manifested (outcomes)
<p><u>Children living with disabilities</u></p> <p>Number of children enrolled in 5 special education schools/centres: 384</p> <p>Suspected many students enrolled in school have functional learning disabilities ranging from mild to significant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and physical barriers • Negative expectations on outcomes • Risky behaviours • Limited family, community and institutional support • Prohibitive costs of care and supportive devices to accommodate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less access (physical, services), exclusion • Underperformance in education and labour market • Indigence and poverty • Stigma. Non-realisation of their right to participate, right to play, right to education. • Less access to employment opportunities
<p><u>Children of migrant families</u></p> <p>International migrant stock <i>estimated</i> at:</p> <p>12,180 (6, 079 male/6,101 female)</p> <p>1,850 under five</p> <p>Emigrants often leave children behind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parent</i>: Low social status in the country associated with situation of parent in country (low paid, low skills, language barrier. Parental absence). • <i>Child</i>: Lack of legal status/appropriate documentation to access social services. Separation from extended family and culture. Language barrier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma. • Academic underperformance • Comparative difficulty for social inclusion. • Difficulty accessing social services • Child labor and/or trafficking
<p><u>Children in conflict with the law</u></p> <p>446 children charged with offences (2012 - 2014)</p> <p>2015: 169 juveniles charged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unemployment • economic vulnerability • Indigence, poverty and vulnerability • Emotional and educational underperformance • Dysfunctional and/or violent families and/or communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recidivism • Risk of life long negative effect • No second chance • No higher level education due to absence of diversion programmes

4 Right to Protection



States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement. (CRC, article 19)

All nations are obligated to protect their children's right to a life free from conditions that violate their rights. As outlined in the CRC, all children less than 18 years old have a right to be protected from conditions that violate their childhood rights, expose them to abuse and exploitation, devalue them, and draw them prematurely into adult roles. Particularly vulnerable are children deprived of parental care, victims of sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect, in conflict with the law, living with one or more disabilities, or victims

of trafficking, exploited for commercial purposes. The SDGs include a specific target to "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children".⁴¹ Aligned with this target, the international community has renewed the commitment to reform child protection agencies and systems. Though the SDGs explicitly refer to child protection, it is clear that many of the other targets will not be achieved without addressing the concerns of vulnerable children. Actors and institutions at the individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy levels bear the duty of delivering the services, creating the demand, and enabling the environment that nurture the growth and development outcomes essential for the realization of children's rights.

41 Sustainable Development Goals, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Target 16.2

A robust, dynamic, and comprehensive legal framework is indispensable to enable rights-holders to exercise the rights and duty-bearers to discharge their responsibilities in achieving the ultimate goal of a developmental approach to child care and protection. In addition to the CRC, CEDAW and the CRPD, St. Lucia has adopted other key international legal instruments aimed at addressing interlinked problems of harmful child labour, trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children for commercial gain. Further the national legislation and policies articulate bold targets aligned with the SDGs and strategic regional visions that aim to improve the lives of boys and girls in areas of education, health, food security, and social protection. In several instances the effort of St. Lucia has been progressive in ways that places the country on the cutting edge as compared to other OECS countries offering, in some cases, greater or optimal notably in the area of child victims of sexual offences. Recent legal reform has rendered all sex offences gender neutral affording equal protection to boys and girls from sexual victimization and exploitation. Laws now limit the ambit of the honest belief defense so as to prohibit adults from advancing the position that they “reasonably and honestly” believed that a child was above the age of consent. These examples clearly demonstrate a solemn commitment to the foundational principles from which all child rights must be protected and achieved.

The Division of Human Services (DHS) within the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice & Empowerment is the main government body entrusted with the responsibility for the protection of children from all forms of abuse and neglect as well as advocating juvenile and human rights issues. The Division

was formed in 1993, the same year St. Lucia ratified the CRC and has remained in the forefront of child protection issues in the country. The budget has remained constant since FY 2010-2011 for administrative costs and the operation of welfare services, a transit home and family and child care matters.⁴²

The number of staff for the DHS has increased from 18 in FY 2009-2010 to 20 in FY 2013-2014, excluding staff at the Transit Home.⁴³ Staff for the Family and Child Care function which includes residential and foster care, adoption, and monitoring and therapeutic action for care and protection cases nearly doubled over that period. In 2016 DHS had 14 profession staff for the entire division: 1 Director, 1 Senior Field Social Worker, 2 Intake Social Workers, and 10 Family Service Workers (2 assigned to foster care). As the major actor for service delivery in child protection in St. Lucia with a wide-ranging mandate and range of services, DHS lacks the variety of specialized staff needed to execute the services effectively and efficiently. The duties of child protection are shared by all which can make accountability difficult. DHS underscored this point as a major challenge.

While it is near impossible to establish statistically, the extent to which child abuse and neglect affects poor households in St. Lucia, data and analysis from the MICS of 2012 provides an informative backdrop and statistics on a set of circumstances, when they come together, threaten the protection of children. The child protection domain of the MICS features indicators of domestic violence, birth registration rates and child labour revealing that older children (12 years and older) are better off than younger children (0-4 and 5-11 year olds).⁴⁴

- Domestic violence: One in five children lives with adults who favor severe methods of punishment. The share of children not being subjected to hard discipline is 57.2 per cent with this proportion being lower among households with more than one child.⁴⁵ This analysis is somewhat supported by results from another survey⁴⁶ conducted two years later in 2012

42 UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Budget Analysis for Investments in Children in Saint Lucia,

43 IBID.

44 UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Mapping of Child Well-being in Saint Lucia, 2015

45 IBID

46 UNICEF, Social survey on Violence against Children and Women: Attitudes to Corporal Punishment, Child Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence in St. Lucia, 2014

that notes that 58 per cent of the respondents generally did not support corporal punishment.⁴⁷

- Birth registration: 88.7 per cent of children under the age of 5 years are registered with children in larger households which have more children less likely to be registered than smaller households.⁴⁸
- Child labour: exists in St. Lucia but in low percentages with less than 2 per cent of children indicating that they are engaged in some form of work.⁴⁹

As mentioned earlier, women are over-represented in lower income brackets in addition to having higher representation among the population that is economically inactive, they are consequently more affected by poverty than men. There were 42.5 percent of households headed by women who fall within the bottom two wealth quintiles. Careful analysis of these factors shows that not all households headed by single females are poor, sources of child neglect and abuse, or at the centre of criminal behaviour among young people. However, more of such households are poor and they may give a boost to the notion of 'learned helplessness' that can promote intergenerational poverty.

Emerging research in the region points to nuanced analysis that drills down on the female headed household and the union status that would likely contribute to her poverty.⁵⁰ While conducting the field work for the SitAn, many of the female government administrators identified themselves as a single mother living alone. Others applauded their mothers who raised them single-handedly.

However, in these cases there poverty was absent, children experience (d) a 'connectedness' with the community, extended family and or religious communities. A female heading a poor household where the male has migrated, for example does not present the same outcome as the female headed household in a 'visiting relationship' or 'revolving door' relationships. Also, elderly women heading households are less likely to be poor. It is important to make these distinctions when discussing single female headed households, poverty and child abuse and neglect. Particularly, in cultures that sometimes prefer visiting relationships to marriage and do not assume there is welfare gain from marriage. The budding research on this subject will undoubtedly stimulate the debate and bring fresh analysis to light that can be applied to better address the complex linkages between poverty, child protection and the cultural practices that result in negative consequences.

The way children are treated is greatly affected by growing income inequality, globalization, migration, urbanization, health threats, and other multi-faceted determinants of poverty, as well as low levels of social cohesion. Good parenting and home, school and community environments that promote healthy connectedness for children and positive non-violent discipline are factors that are likely to prevent violence and abuse. The 2007 Joint Report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank indicates a rise in sexual assault, sexual violence and domestic violence in the region. Region-wide research conducted by the University of Huddersfield and commissioned by UNICEF also helped to highlight the gravity of child sexual abuse in the Caribbean.⁵¹

Child abuse is characterized by a variety of forms -physical, verbal, psychological categories and often includes varying degrees of violence, sexual harassment and molestation. Perpetrators of child abuse also vary in who they are – starting from parents, step-parents, visiting male partners of mothers, foster-parents, other members of the immediate, extended family and care givers,

47 There are some distinguishing differences in the term "hard discipline" used in the MICS "corporal punishment" in the second survey. However, for the purposes of this comparison, the difference is negligible.

48 UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Mapping of Child Well-being in Saint Lucia, 2015

49 IBID

50 Caribbean Development Bank, The Changing Nature of Poverty and Inequality in the Caribbean: New Issues, New Solutions, May 2016.

51 Jones and Trotman Jemcott 2009.

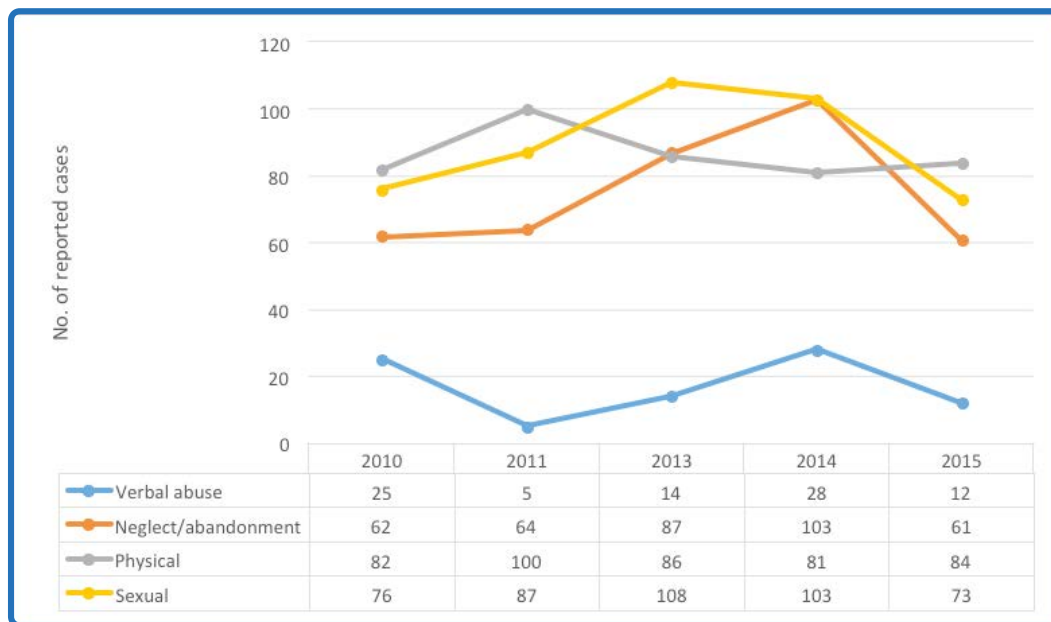
to others in the community, school, work and church environments. The Mandatory Reporting Provision S. 119 (1) of the revised Criminal Code establishes who is obligated to report CSA and to whom they should report, setting a penalty of a fine of one thousand dollars, if convicted. While this step represents important progress, it falls short of protecting child victims of other forms of maltreatment and is rendered ineffective given its lack of enforcement. The Royal St. Lucia Police have produced the Child Abuse Investigation Manual in 2003 which impressively provides detailed guidelines for inter-agency cooperation on child protection issues, the role of the Vulnerable Persons Team, and investigation procedures. A National Child Abuse Reporting Protocol has been drafted and is awaiting necessary statutory implementation as of 2017.

Girls are more often victims of abuse than boys. The issue of violence against girls and women can be closely linked to child abuse as they are

particularly at risk to sexual abuse including incest. Child abuse is regarded as a willful act, but many children are also vulnerable to neglect, where their basic needs are overlooked by those who are duty-bound to provide for them.

Global data shows that about “6 in 10 children between the ages of 2 and 14 (almost a billion) are subjected to physical punishment by their caregivers on a regular basis”.⁵² Strengthening national protection systems relies on several very important determinants and their complex interaction. An example of the complexity of this interaction is seen when looking at the problems of child abuse and questioning why social tolerance for child abuse is high in some Lucian communities. The number of child abuse cases reported over the period of 2010-2015 totaled 1,341 as Figure 10 shows. Generally girls account for over 70 per cent of the victims. The 12-16 year old group are most often victims and many of the total cases are incest, as was the case for 29 of

Figure 10. Number of cases of child abuse reported 2010-2015



52 United Nations Children’s Fund, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, UNICEF, New York, 2014. https://unicef.org/publications/files/Hidden_in_plain_sight_statistical_analysis_EN_3_Sept_2014

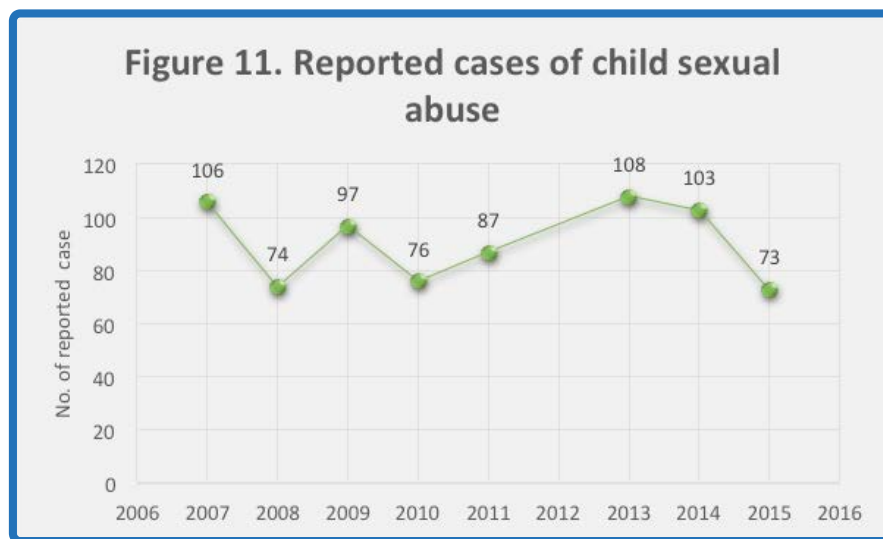
the 103 reports in 2014.⁵³ Sexual abuse was the most common type of reported abuse, accounting for 34 per cent, of all reported cases, followed by physical abuse for 32 per cent and neglect/abandonment with a total of 28 per cent of the cases. Verbal abuse represented 84 cases of the total reported. All but the reports of physical cases saw an increase in 2014.

The trend in reported cases of child sexual abuse (CSA) in St. Lucia has fluctuated over the period of 2007-2015 as illustrated in figure 11 below. CSA include girls and boys who were raped, bugged, sexually molested, exposed to sexual acts or inappropriately propositioned for sexual favors.

Vulnerability to CSA depends in part on the child's age and gender. Whilst CSA can be directed at young girls and boys, data shows a tendency for rates to rise after the onset of puberty with the highest rates occurring during

adolescence. Estimates on the prevalence of CSA can be misleading because of the way in which information is collected and sources of the reporting. Children rarely report suffering from sexual abuse. A review of the DHS' documents 2007-2015 (2012 was not available) indicates that the main referral sources of sexual abuse cases come from mothers, anonymous callers and health clinics. Of the 63 perpetrators identified in cases reported in 2010, all were known to the victims. Among these over 38 per cent were identified as 'community members'. Over half of the perpetrators were family members including uncles, fathers (representing 20 per cent), cousins, stepfathers and brother-in-laws.⁵⁴ The body of evidence available from the sub region indicates that multiple offending occurs within households with more than one child victim.⁵⁵ Children who experience CSA are often victims of neglect and suffer physical abuse as well.

Figure 11. Reported cases of child sexual abuse



53 DHS directly. Nb. Data not available for 2012
 54 UNICEF, 2015 Child Protection Statistical Digest
 55 See for example, Understanding Child Sexual Abuse, Perspectives from the Caribbean, Edited by Adele D. Jones, University of Huddersfield, UK, 2013. Also see Sexual Violence Against Children in the Caribbean, Report 2012, UNICEF.

The manifestations of child abuse and neglect cover a broad spectrum including when a parent/caregiver fails to provide for the development of the child in the all areas. Experiences of CSA, in particular, can result in serious health consequences later in life. Research shows that psychological (depression and anxiety, developmental delays, suicidal and self-harm, among others), behavioural (alcohol and drug abuse, poor self-esteem, under performance in school, etc.), reproductive (STD, unwanted pregnancy, reproductive health problems) and sexual (sexual dysfunction) issues can persist for years and decades. Some children have symptoms that do not reach clinical levels of concern until later in life while others meet the full criteria for clinical intervention immediately. Monitoring and assisting the child victim to adjust after the potential negative psychological, behavioral, emotional and physical effects requires up-to-date integrated information systems, cross-agency case management and conferencing, committed and specialised personnel as well as delicate and confidential approaches.

Whilst not all children suffering sexual abuse will experience the same outcomes or be left with residual effects or difficulties, bringing perpetrators to justice can be equally as harmful. While considerable action has been taken by St. Lucia to bring awareness to the issue of CSA, there is much to be done to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. The process can take “way too long” and family members are often “paid off” before the court date as interviewees opined. Although, initiatives have been launched to better prepare and protect the child victim from stigma and exposure (use of video testimony) throughout the legal process, few CSA cases reach the courts.

Violence knows no boundaries. It takes place in all settings, including those where children

expect to be safe – in schools, on playgrounds, in justice and care institutions, and also in the home. Given the various forms that child abuse and neglect can take and the numerous contexts within which it occurs, government has launched a number of initiatives that target behaviours in the home, school as well as other settings. The focus on good parenting is intended to reinforce the strong attachment bonds between parents/caregivers and children and positive non-violent discipline. Good practices in St. Lucia include:

Child Victim Witness Programme: operated by the Family Court, the programme carefully prepares children for their role in court, using video to directly link into the courtroom, when they are called on to give evidence in cases where they are either victims and/or witnesses to abuse using video links to the courtroom.

Break the Silence: Very effective advocacy campaign targeting adults, children and all service providers. Likely the main reason reporting has improved over the past few years.

Positive Parenting: In an effort to strengthen parents’ sense of responsibility and ability to protect their children, DHS developed a Positive Parenting manual that is widely used by practitioners and trainers in other departments and NGOs. The aim is to raise parent’s confidence in their parenting skills by ‘unlearning’ negative emotional and behaviors (disrespect, hatred, flogging, beating and yelling, mistrust) and replace them with positive alternatives (love, respect, alternative approaches to discipline, active listening and effective communications, and trust). The parenting programme is operated by the Family Court and targets parents with children who are victims of family violence and various forms of child maltreatment. DHR is also using the manual targeting parents whose children are referred to them because they are beyond care and control.

The nine module manual includes the topics of: i) understanding family issues, ii) child development, iii) understanding you, iv) when things change, v) teach them the essentials, vi) alternative discipline,

56 See for example, Fergusson DM, Howood MT, Lynsky LJ. Childhood sexual abuse and psychiatric disorder in young adulthood. Psychiatric outcomes of childhood sexually abuse. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1996.

vii) what do we know when it comes to the law - safeguarding the promoting the welfare of the child. The role of parents and relevant protection agencies, viii) self-care, and ix) resources.

Using methodologies that promote robust interaction between parent participants and role-play, the classes build a better understanding of what is needed to bring parenting beyond the

custodial role and render families more functional. Parents support and learn from one another by exchanging actual experiences and examining ways in which their situation could have been handled more effectively. Sustained funding is needed to expand the parenting programme, fully develop the methodology and materials and follow-up with parents who have completed the sessions to measure the overall results.

A journey of twenty days: two sisters sharing the victim's pain of being sexually abused*

This story is not uncommon in St. Lucia or other Caribbean nations. It happens too often and remains too silent, hidden beneath the cover of shame and the ugliness of impunity.

DAY 1: The younger of the two sisters walked into the office of the school principal with the hope of speaking to her concerning the emotional load that she seemed to have been carrying for a while now. But because the principal was absent on that day, the petite 10 year old unfortunately had to carry her load alone for yet another day.

DAY 2: The ten year old going back to the principal hoped that this day she would be rescued. In her conversation with the principle, she demurely explained that she and her siblings were unable to sleep at night because the tiny one-room house which has a room divider only a thin curtain, was unable to shield them from the noise of their mother's frequent sexual activities. "I think my mother has a problem because before the man reach, she is already naked" she volunteered. As she grew more at ease, she further disclosed that she, her 12 year old sister and a 7 year old cousin, were

sexually abused by their neighbor, “Willow” who appears to be in his seventies. After listening to the 10 year old, holding back emotion the principal telephoned the child’s godmother to inform her of the child’s ordeal and enquired if she could help by providing a temporary home for the child indicating that DHS should be informed of the situation involving all three children.

DAY 4: Knowledgeable of the children’s family background, the godmother determined to break the cycle, took the two sisters to DHS. At DHS the sisters were interviewed and their statements duly documented. To be noted, DHS did not have a dossier on the girls’ mother despite the fact that this same mother, six weeks prior, had abandoned her new born baby boy at Victoria Hospital because she felt she would not be able to care for him. At the end of the interview, a referral was given to the godmother/guardian to take to the Police Department’s Vulnerable Unit at the View-Fort Police Head Quarters for processing.

DAY 5: The two sisters arrive at Vieux-Fort police station with the referral and there, they were escorted to an area which was meant to be the ‘Vulnerable Unit’. The term supposed was not used in error, but rather because nothing about that place seemed friendly to the vulnerable. It was one large room filled with six desks for the officers of that department, so in earnest it resembled the girls’ house, just bigger. However, while the girls’ house had a thin curtain partition, this unit, where they were to relay their ordeal, had no privacy at all.

During the interview the officer wanted to know whether the godmother would be willing to take the matter before the Court. The officer did her best to make the girls feel comfortable, but they did not

want to speak. The officer experienced in these matters, realized their discomfort and asked for them to write down what had happened, and they did. After reading what the girls had written, the officer then tried to schedule an appointment with a doctor at St. Jude's Hospital, but was told that the sisters could not be seen until Thursday, five days away.

DAY 6: two female officers assigned to the Vieux-Fort police stations arrive at the mom's home where they interviewed the mom and the sisters individually.

DAY 7: the two officers returned during school hours to further investigate. They accompanied the sisters to the alleged abuser's home so that they could identify the room where the abuse took place. Throughout this entire process, the two young sisters endured the fire of darting eyes and stares from both family members and neighbors who believed they were lying all along and stated out loud opinions about how the girls had no right to go and tell anyone.

DAY 10: the 30 year old unemployed mother of the sisters and three other children, received EC\$50 from the godmother to take the girls to the St. Jude's Hospital. Arriving and asked to wait a while, the mother was informed that the medical examinations could not take place on that day as planned because the doctor was attending a workshop. A new appointment was made which meant that she would have needed additional funding to return 6 days later.

DAY 15: a telephone call was received the hospital the day before the scheduled appointment informing that the appointment had been rescheduled for a day later.

DAY 17: finally the young sisters endured a vaginal examination and blood tests were submitted for analysis.

DAY 21: no information has been disclosed and so the journey continues with no assurance that these sisters' cry will ever be truly answered.

Documented by: E Hippolyte

***Account of actual events that took place in St. Lucia from October 13, 2015 – November 3, 2015.**

Children in conflict with the law

The consequences of violence go far beyond the immediate results of morbidity and mortality. The longer-term negative effects can be devastating on mental and reproductive health as well as general socioeconomic development, especially for children. It is widely acknowledged that health information systems require strengthening in the Caribbean and morbidity and mortality statistics required to fully understand the burden of violent behavior are not current and/or do not always meet quality standards or are simply not available. Equally problematic is official crime statistics which are found to underestimate levels of victimization when compared to self-reported data. This is acutely so when looking at statistics on domestic violence and child abuse, for example, as the incidents tend to be much higher than what is reported. However, interrogating these data despite the shortcomings are important to understand the magnitude and scope of the

issues regarding children in conflict with the law. Although there is limited quantitative data available on the subject, increasing awareness of interpersonal violence, violence against children and aggression in the Caribbean is a result of significant qualitative data emerging through studies and surveys and more self-reporting due to effective advocacy and social media campaigns.

Flowing from St. Lucia's constitutional and political commitment to the best interests of the child in every matter concerning the child, St. Lucia created a Child Justice Bill and a Care and Adoption Bill over a decade ago. The UNICEF 1995-1996 Situation Analysis of Children and their Families in St. Lucia noted that although there had been much progress there was a continued need to update laws and policies related to children, including the Children and Young Persons Act of 1952. This legislative shift is intended to portray parents as duty-bearers responsible for delivering on their child's rights, as opposed to the child's owner and intended, to a large degree to enable a policy framework programme environment that

effectively delivers well-coordinated services for children in conflict with the law. The 2016 field work for this SitAn showed that neither the Model Child Justice Bill nor the Children Care and Adoption Bill have been passed. The Children and Young Persons Act of 1952 (and related amendments), in its current form, continues to allow children 16 years and over to be tried and sentenced as adults.

The main institutional actors in the juvenile justice sector in St. Lucia are few and, as in most small island settings, work formally and informally in seize the momentum and opportunities presented by the political will of the nation. While Child Protection Services unit within DHS serves as the entry point for children experiencing behavioral problems, the Family Court has jurisdiction over both juvenile justice and child protection cases.⁵⁷ The Family Court Act of 1994 provides for a social services function that offers support to the administration of family justice including justice for children. This function at the Family Court is uniquely positioned to offer both legal and social service interventions for children at risk for reasons related to some form of abuse/maltreatment and/or because they are in contact with the juvenile justice system.

This institutional structure makes it a) difficult for at-risk children to navigate through the system (see *A journey of twenty days: two sisters sharing the victim's pain of being sexually abused*, figure X above), and b) challenging for the two institutions

to be effective in delivering on their individual mandates. A fundamental reason the region embarked upon major reform was to develop a structure that distinguished the difference between treatments of children experiencing behavioral problems from those with delinquent behaviors. Such is the intent of the regional momentum to remove legal text and articles that permit juveniles to be charged with status offences.⁵⁸ Over 80 per cent of adults interviewed for the SitAn exercise mentioned the major problem facing children in their community is that they are “beyond care and control”. Some suggested that these “deviant children” should be admitted to state programmes designed to “get them under control”. A 12 year old child victim of sexual or physical abuse or neglect who is repeatedly absent from school or experiencing difficulty coping with the home environment, for example, may be referred to DHS or the Probation Department for “care and protection”. In the St. Lucian context, this child could be placed pursuant of the care and protection provisions under the current law.

Success of collaborative effort is thwarted at times by the absence of a national plan of action. This is especially crucial considering the number of Ministries, NGOs and partners dealing with issues pertaining to children, it is a challenge to combine their divergent efforts. The number and capacity of NGOs and church- or community-based programmes to intervene in the area of child protection in St. Lucia is limited, unlike other islands with larger population. In Jamaica and other large Caribbean societies for example, the number of juvenile prevention programmes are flourishing. St. Lucia has a paucity of prevention programme initiatives as well as no written policy or strategy to guide the few who bring their best effort to the cause. The result is ad hoc service delivery and either a duplication of effort or gaps in support need for children in need of care and protection.

Communities are on the front line of the response, but support to community child-care forums sometimes suffers from inconsistency, discontinuity and inadequate reach. In the context of widespread, transgenerational poverty and its

57 Although the Family Court is of magisterial jurisdiction, a unique feature of the juvenile justice system in St. Lucia is the option for juveniles charged to elect to have their cases heard before the High Court instead of the Family Court.

58 Status offences refer to a number of activities that are deemed offenses when committed by juveniles, because of their age at the time of the activity. These offences usually concern acts of truancy, wandering, begging, running away from home, or considered to be 'out of control'. The Riyadh Guidelines are very clear on this issue stating that “legislation should be enacted to ensure that any conduct not considered an offence or not penalized if committed by an adult is not considered an offence and not penalized if committed by a young person.”

multiple deprivations, support for families to care for their children is vital to improve outcomes for children. It is against this legislation backdrop that a number of programme actions were initiated to capture and guide children through the juvenile justice system.

Diversion away from detention is generally considered to be better for child outcomes and re-integration into society. Incarceration can both increase the chances of re-offence and hinder young people's chances for education, employment and health.⁵⁹ International research evidence suggests that community-based interventions which target multiple aspects or contexts of the child's life (for example family, peers) are most effective in encouraging behavioural change and reducing offending behaviour.⁶⁰

To minimize crime and reduce recidivism, the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security under the supervision of Probation and Parole Services, in 2010 embarked upon a Court Diversion Programme. The primary aim was to minimize crime, reduce recidivism and address deviant behaviour among young offenders, and those at risk between the ages of 12–19 years. Through this mechanism, young persons were provided with the opportunity to strengthen their self-esteem, as well as to develop the ability to identify alternative methods of managing adverse situations. The program was also designed to foster positive attitudes towards others and work related situations, thus empowering individuals for

more wholesome and interdependent living. With funding and support coming from international partners, the programme was put discontinued when the funding cycle ended in mid-2016.

An integrated system for collecting and managing data on children's contact with the juvenile justice system is lacking in St. Lucia. The generation of child centred data of good quality to inform decision making requires efforts from all agencies that produce information. The strong research record in St. Lucia is somewhat inconsistent as far as child protection is concerned. National planning and decision making for child protection can become more powerful if information sharing regarding planned child-focused research becomes enhanced. Achieving this progress must start with the agencies that have specific mandates for child protection. The patchy information systems reflecting outreach and service provision in the area of care and protection need to be consolidated.

During the period of 2012-2014, 446 boys and girls were charged with criminal offences (345 boys and 101 girls) representing just under 50 children charged per capita (100,000).⁶¹ Types of offences include: stealing, assault, wounding, drug related, trespassing, care and protection, and other. The Court Diversion Programme received 63 juvenile (18 and under) referrals from 2011 -2014.⁶²

The DHS and the Family Court share responsibility for two institutional facilities:

- 1) The Upton Gardens Girls Centre is a non-residential centre for girls 12-16 with behavioral challenges. The centre's origins are grounded in the services of the St. Lucia Council for Women. With a capacity of 25 and although it receives some NGO and private funding, the subvention from government is the largest source of funding. 25 girls were in attendance at the daily guidance sessions in September 2016. St. Lucia does not have a residential facility for girls.

59 Holman B. & Ziedenberg J. (2006). *The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*. Washington: Justice Policy Institute. 35 Holman & Ziedenberg (2006) 136 E.g. McGuire & Priestley (1995)

60 McGuire J. & Priestley P. (1995). "Reviewing 'what works': Past, present, future" in McGuire J. (ed.). *What works: reducing reoffending: Guidelines from research and practice*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

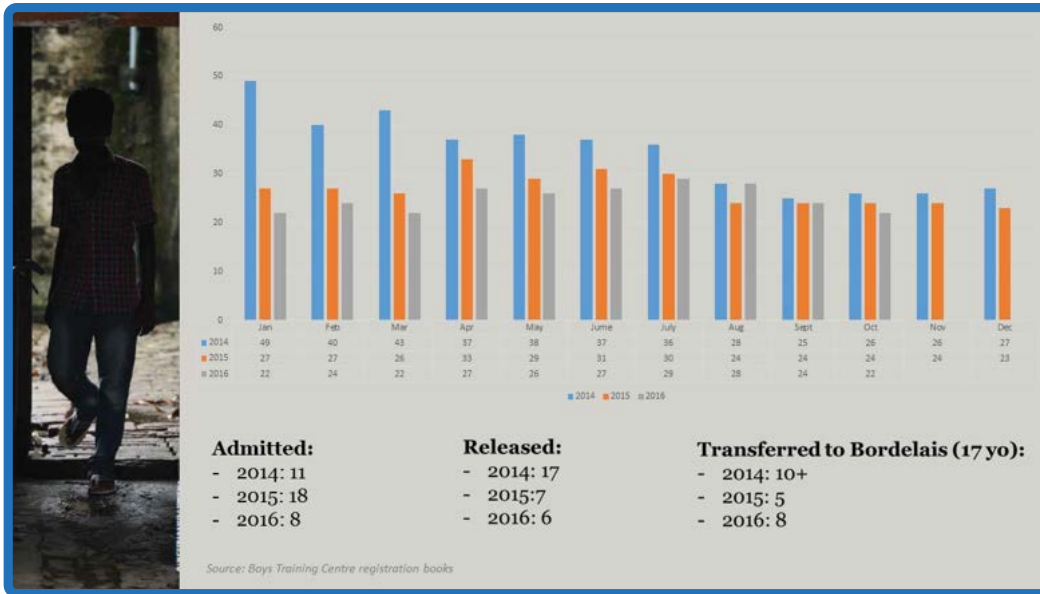
61 OECS, *Background Paper on the Status of Juvenile Justice in the OECS and other Specified Caribbean Countries*, October 2015.

62 UNICEF, 2015 Child Protection Statistical Digest, St. Lucia.

2) the Boys Training Center, a residential home for boys in conflict with the law (12-16 years of age) as well as boys in need of care and protection (10 – 18 years of age). There are 39 staff members working directly with the children. The centre is state fully funded by the state and provides remedial and vocational activities as well as an in-house educational programme

for the boys. Boys who receive sentences that do not come to completion before their 17th birthday are transferred to Custodial Care Bordelais Correctional Facility. Twenty-one children including one girl were in custody in 2013.⁶³ Figure 12 below summarizes of the admissions and releases covering 2014-2016.⁶⁴

Figure 12. Number of residents at Boys Training Center, 2014-2016



63 UNICEF, 2015 Child Protection Statistical Digest, St. Lucia.
 64 Data taken directly from the BTC registration log, September 2016

No child should ever be institutionalized, bought or sold, stolen from a family or otherwise victimized: every child deserves to grow up in a loving family

When children are removed from their biological homes for care and protection, these options may be pursued in the best interests of the child:

- **Residential Care:** in accordance with article 20 of the CRC a child temporarily or permanently deprived of his/her family environment, or whose own best interests cannot permit her/him to remain in that environment, has a right to special protection and assistance provided by the state.
- **Adoption:** Adoption, both national and intercountry, is viewed as an option for children without primary caregivers, provided that it is conducted in accordance with the pertinent laws and regulations and within an effective child welfare and protection system (see articles 20 and 21).
- **Foster Care/Kinship Care:** It is also recognized that the placement of a child in a "suitable institution for care and protection" should only occur when it is in the best interests of the child and when the child cannot be placed within a family environment such as foster care/kinship care (see articles 9 and 20)

"The single most influential factor in a child's positive psychosocial development may be having at least one strong relationship with a caring adult" Patrice L. Engle



Residential care

The birth family of a child is the best possible safe haven when it provides a solid nurturing environment. This environment can become dysfunctional and dangerous for some children due to parental divorce, abandonment by parents/caregivers, all forms of abuse, domestic violence, failure of family support, or death of parent/caregiver. When children are deprived of a nurturing environment they are admitted to residential care. Children experiencing these circumstances face the double burden of feeling confused and ashamed of being rejected by their natural parents and the stigmatization and discrimination, through no fault of their own, that often accompanies their situation.

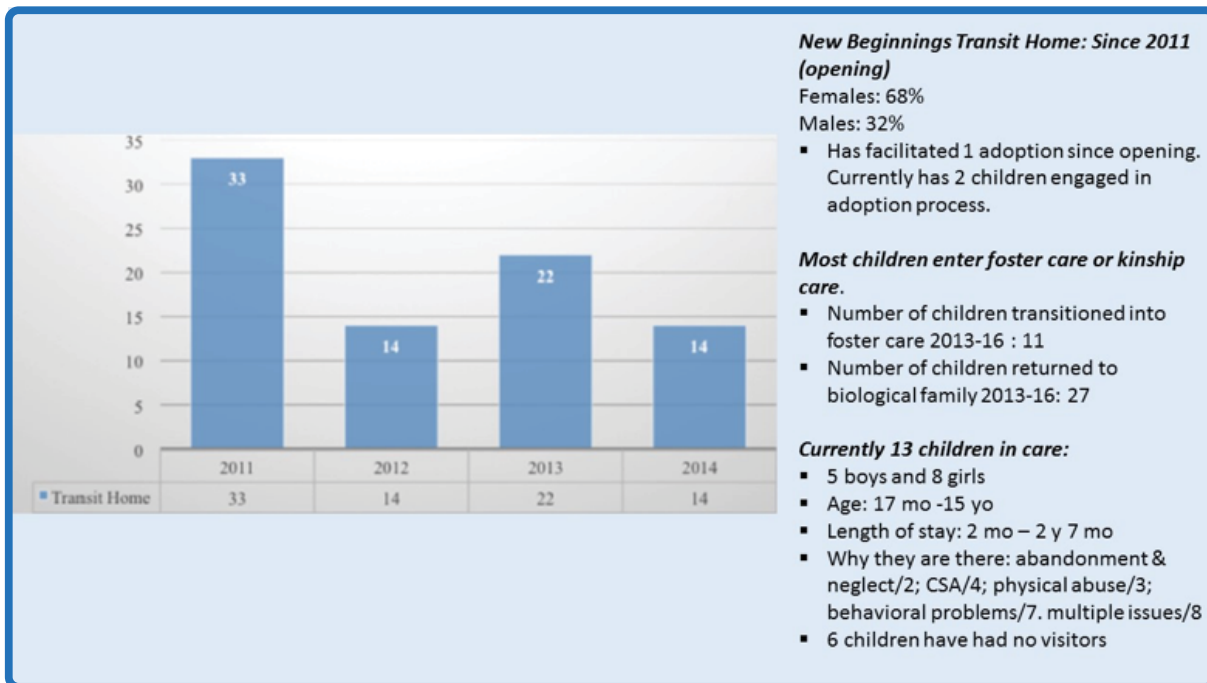
Referrals for placement of children in need of care and protection come from the court system, police, hospital or the parent/caregiver themselves who lack the parenting ability and/or capacity. The vision of the Family Court and DHS is to ensure

that every child in need of care and protection is provided with a loving home environment. In doing so, the main focus is placed on the child's return to his/her immediate or extended family, where this is possible and in the best interest of the child. This is often facilitated through strengthening families and building capacity within their homes. Otherwise, residential care, foster care and adoption are other options pursued.

There are two residential homes in St. Lucia intended for children in need of care and protection.

Holy Family Children's Home: Privately operated with accommodation for 10 children ages birth to 10 years of age. However they do take older children on an exceptional basis. Established in 1997, the centre receives children for Care and Protection because of abuse, neglect or orphaned. The home aims to place children in adopted families. Six staff are on site and is primarily funded by the Catholic Church. As of September 2016, 8 children were in residence.

Figure 13. Number of admissions to New Beginnings Transit Home 2011-2012



New Beginnings Transit home: established to accommodate exclusively children in need of care and protection because of abuse and neglect. However, they have received children, especially girls with behavioural issues as the primary manifestation. The age limit for girls is 2-16 years and 2-10 for boys although they sometimes receive infants whom they prioritize for foster care or kinship care. Designed to accommodate 21 children, the centre is fully funded by the state. The centre had 13 residents in September of 2016.

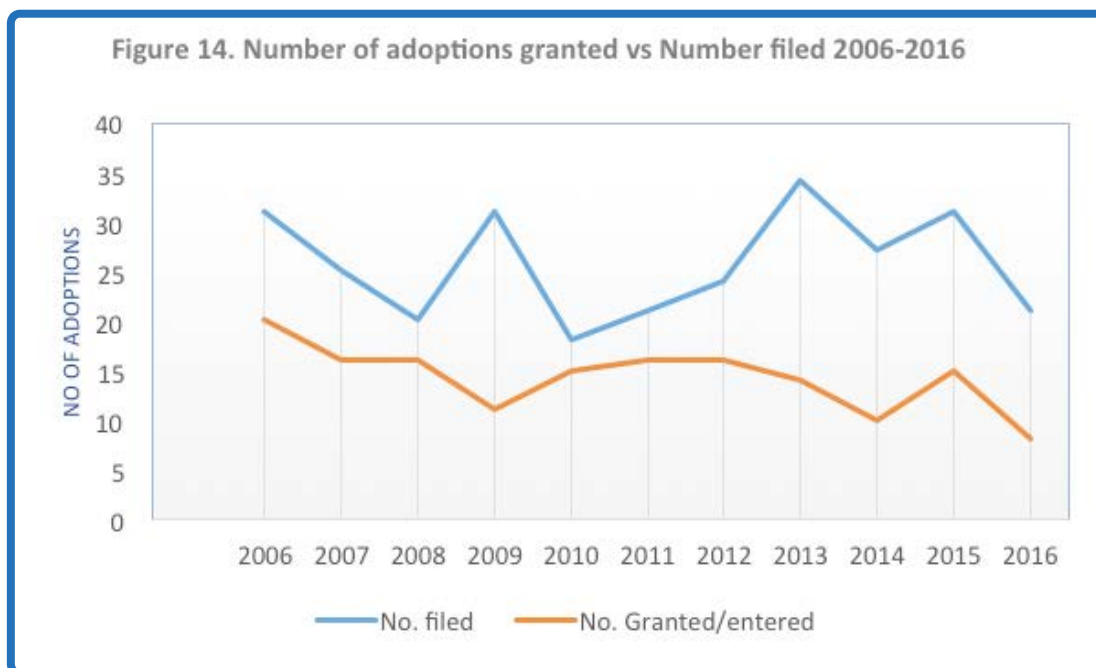
Foster care and adoption

The fostering programme in St. Lucia has grown out of a social protection measure implemented since the establishment of DHS in the mid-1990s. DHS produced the Foster Care and Adoption Policy and Procedures Manual in 2001. By 2016 DHS reported the programme accommodating 132 children in the care of 101 foster parent. The programme is headed by one professional, a

family case worker. New foster care providers are recruited with the vision of fostering as a short-, medium- and long-term solution for children who have been abused, waiting for adoption and/or in need of emergency placement. In preparation for the role of fostering some parents receive a basic training using the Positive Parenting model. To fully institutionalize the programme a continuous flow of resources is required for the programme to adequately serve children in need of care and protection in a loving home environment.

Adoption is the traditional method of care for orphaned children and has for decades been regarded as the most effective way to provide permanent and stable family life for children in distress. It provides long-term family relationships and gives a child a sense of belonging. Adoption should only be undertaken as a uniquely child-centred practice and only if it is in accordance with all of the other rights of the child concerned. The Children (Care and Adoption) Bill, in draft and currently under discussion, is expected to better protect and promote the well-being of children

Figure 14. Number of adoptions granted vs Number filed 2006-2016



since it ensures that placement is considered only when it is suitable for specific children, and provided the adoptive families are qualified and can meet the needs of the child. The new bill will:

- Establish adoption committee
- Permit single person adoption
- Establish review panel
- Maintain adoption list
- Establish framework for improved supervision of placement
- Establish framework for inter-country adoption (MoU)
- Facilitate a functional regulatory system
- Promote good care and placement practices

The DHS has the responsibility for managing the process and facilitating the arrangements for adoptions. As with most countries in the region,

the major challenge is shortening the period of approval for the prospective adoptive parents. With few children available for adoption and the preference for babies or toddlers, finding the child to match the prospective adoptive parent(s) results in a waiting list. Also, the process itself can be lengthy. Records show that of the 446 filed, 289 adoptions were granted and entered in the Adoption Register for the period of 2001-2016. Figure 14 below illustrates this trend over the period of the past ten years (2006-2016).⁶⁵

Child trafficking and child labour

Trafficking of children constitutes multiple and extreme forms of one or more types of exploitation – abuse, violence and commercial exploitation, depriving them of their rights to: care within their family, a secure life within their natural environment, opportunities for education, proper employment as adults, dignity, self-esteem, honour and ultimately a future as responsible citizens, since many trafficked children are led

⁶⁵ Government of St. Lucia, Ministry of Justice, Civil Status Registry, December 2016.

into a life of crime. In St. Lucia, there is little information – anecdotal or otherwise about the existence of any such practice in the country. Use of children for commercial sexual exploitation is banned by law.

The St. Lucia MICS 2012 states that overall, 8 per cent of children aged 5-14 are involved in child labour and they are three times more likely to be from the poorest households (12 per cent) than from the richest households (4 per cent). There is a robust debate among Lucians concerning what constitutes “child labour” and if having children do chores around the house is considered child labour. According to article 32 of the CRC,

“States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development”.

Figure 15. Overview of child trafficking and child labour, 2016



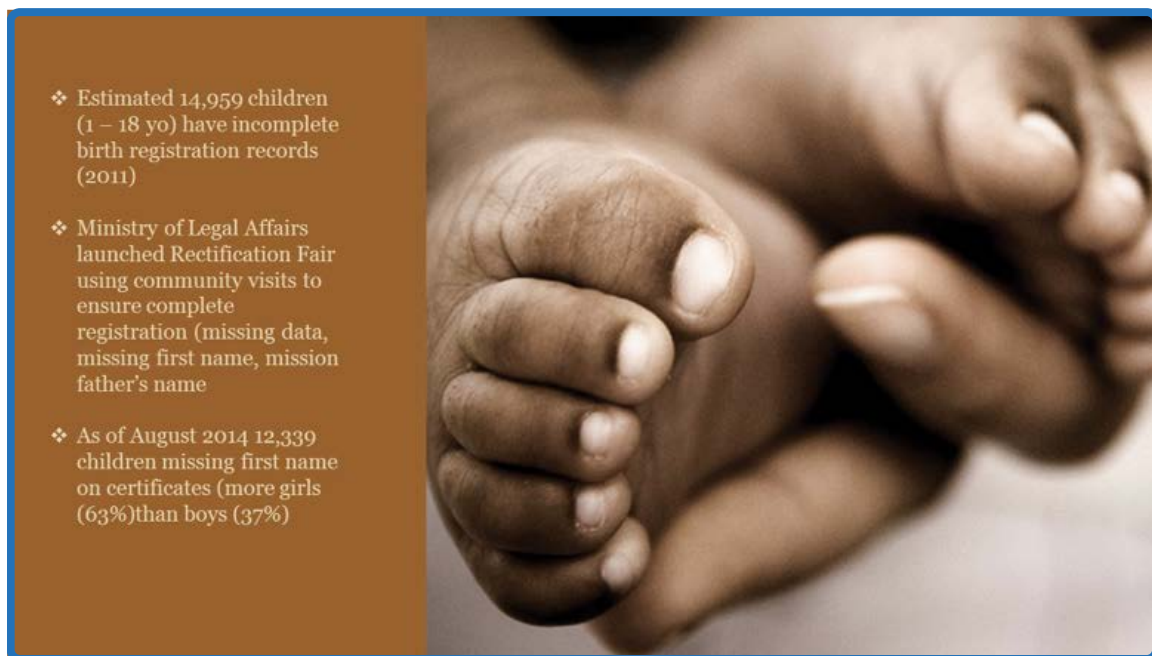
Birth registration

Article 7 of the CRC calls for the registration a child immediately after birth. The Child Status Act in St. Lucia calls for all births to be registered within 21 days with the child's name recorded at the time of registration.

Birth registration ensures children's recognition before the law and enables access to vital services for children and their families. Although there has been steady progress towards universal registration of infants the legal time frame,

registration documents often have some small error that requires a sometimes lengthy process to correct. This is of concern, for, among other reasons, it hinders access to schools, Safety net services, passports, etc. In 2011, the Ministry of Legal Affairs launched a Rectification Fair. At that time it was estimated that nearly 15,000 children from the age of 1 to 18 had incomplete birth registration records with missing or incorrect names on the certificates. Several of these events were organised throughout the country to promote birth registration and to open up opportunities for the corrections to be made.

Figure 16. Birth registration reform



5 The Right to Education



Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. Children have a particular responsibility to respect the rights of their parents, and education should aim to develop respect for the values and culture of their parents (CRC, article 29).

No nation has achieved sustained economic development without considerable investment in human capital, including education at all levels: early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). All people regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, migrant status and ability/disability have a right to life-long learning opportunities that equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to seize opportunities and fully participate in society. Education empowers the vulnerable, shapes a capable workforce and has a major influence on a country's standard of living.

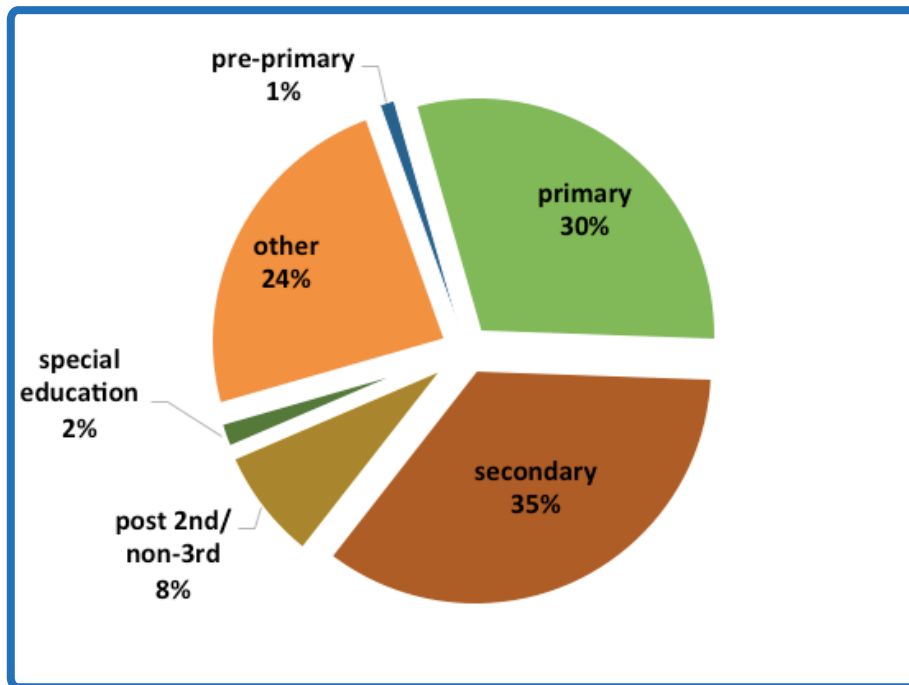
The cornerstones for the Government's approach to education are the CARICOM description of the Ideal Caribbean Person (adopted by Heads of State in 1997) and UNESCO's Pillars of Education (1996). Further, the approach is consistent with key regional frameworks designed to guide educational development and standards in the sub-region, including:

- Towards Regional Policy on Gender Equality and Social Justice, approved in The Bahamas in 1995
- Education for All in the Caribbean: A Plan of Action for 2000–2015
- The Regional Framework for Action on Children 2012–2015
- The Montego Bay Declaration on TVET, March 2012

The Government embarked on reforms in education over a decade ago due to the recognition of many educational challenges, including but not limited to, insufficient school spaces for children of secondary school age, inequities in access to early childhood care and education, limited support services for disadvantaged students, inadequate physical spaces for special education, unstructured TVET, lack of viable alternate education pathways, lack of policies to guide decision making and limited access to post-secondary/tertiary education. With the fundamental aim of raising the achievement levels of learners, there appeared to be "considerable progress was made in resolving the above challenges as well as achieving the EFA goals with the implementation of the 2009-2014 Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP).⁶⁶ The 2015-

66 EFA (Education for All), Esther Chitolie-Joseph, Corporate Planning Unit, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour, St. Lucia: EFA National Review, 2015, page 12.

Figure 17: Education budget 2013-14



2020 ESDP highlights nurturing partnerships with the parents and the community, empowering teachers and learners by providing technological resources, and strengthening accountability systems. This plan also promotes human equality, individual autonomy, democratic values, ethics, morality, social justice, and strong respect for a healthy and productive society. The table above traces a few notable legislative instruments that have contributed to reforming the education sector.

The Government's commitment to education is reflected in the level of education expenditure

over the years relative to GDP: 6.5 percent in 2009/10; 4.7 percent in 2013/14; 4.4 percent in 2014/15.⁶⁷ Though this estimate is stable, the education budget is about 13.2 percent of the total GOSL expenditure (2014-15). Over the years from 2009/10 through 2013/2014, expenditure on primary, secondary and tertiary education exceeded 70 percent of the education budget although the share of spending on early childhood development (ECD) was only 1.2 per cent as evidenced in the above figure.⁶⁸

Early childhood education

Failure to invest in early childhood education (ECE) means that children in the 0–5 age group are less likely to reach their potential for optimal development in the physical, cognitive, linguistic and socio-emotional areas. It is widely acknowledged that the skills developed in early childhood represent the foundation for future learning, skill building and labour market success. Investments in quality ECD strategies are a basic

67 Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), OECS Education Statistical Digest 2012–2013: Past Trends, Present Position, and Projections up to 2017/18, Education Development Management Unit, OECS Commission, Castries, St. Lucia, 2015.

68 UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Budget Analysis for Investments in Children in Saint Lucia, page 4.

first step towards enhancing the long-term potential for a healthy and well-educated workforce with the knowledge and skills needed for productive and fulfilling work and full participation in society. Children completing basic pre-primary learn how to work with others, understand patience and negotiation and develop other skills that are the footing for life-long learning opportunities and social interaction in the school years and beyond.

The associations between poverty and physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development in children at an early age have been shown by a body of international research.⁶⁹ This research notes that young children living in poverty and in other vulnerable situations are: (i) apt to perform poorly in primary and secondary school, (ii) prone to repetition and (iii) inclined to leave school prematurely. Inclusive pre-primary education provides children in poor communities with equality of opportunity for realizing their right to education and the potential to perform to the best of their ability. Reaching adolescent and young adult stages in life without achieving the basic skills offered by primary and secondary school is likely to produce adults with fewer opportunities for becoming highly productive citizens who attain adequate income status. They are more likely to become parents prematurely with undeveloped parenting skills that eventually contribute to the intergenerational transmission of poverty.⁷⁰ In addition to children living in poor communities, children living with disabilities are equally vulnerable.

Replicated from Jamaica in 2005, Roving Caregivers Programme (RCP) used to be in operation (as a home visitation project) but was discontinued in 2014. It “was the only programme being implemented in St. Lucia that offered integrated family support interventions designed to promote the development, health and nutrition of young children (birth to three years) as well as self-esteem, capacity and child rearing practices of parents.”⁷¹ With a view to better prepare the child to meet standard growth and development milestones expected by pre-primary schooling, the services offered through the programme were early stimulation for children, parenting education for parents (disciplinary practices and parenting knowledge), and nutrition. Results from a study indicated that 63 and nearly 70 percent of the fathers surveyed believed that corporal punishment should begin for girls and boys (respectively) from the ages of “1 to 5 years”.⁷² This striking evidence confirmed a need for some parenting coping skills. The programme was delivered directly to the participants (children and parents) in their homes. The stimulation exercises were expected to support changes in infants and toddlers in the following four areas: 1) gross motor skills, 2) fine motor skills, 3) visual reception; 4) receptive language; and 5) expressive language.⁷³

Funded by BVdL, the RCP was initially administered under the Ministry of Education and Culture implemented in 33 communities island-wide from 2004 to 2011. More recently, the RCP has been reintroduced within the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development with funding from CDB for a period of 18 months (November 2016 to April 2018) in the communities of Vieux-Fort and Canaries. The figure below illustrates how this programme gained momentum over the years.⁷⁴ Currently, a new model of service delivery, the Extended Early Childhood Health Outreach (EECHO) project, has been initiated with preliminary funding for a period of 18 months. The EECHO project, operating in three communities, is modeled on the work of the RCP and delivered through the Ministry of Health’s Community Health Workers (CHWs) or Community Health Nurses (CHNs).

69 See Engel, 2008 for example.

70 Ibid.

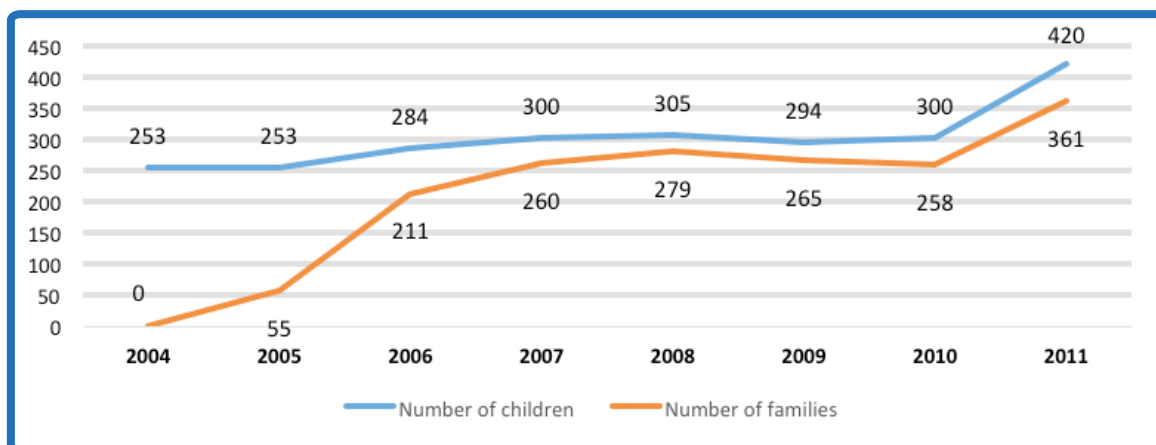
71 Government of Saint Lucia, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour, Early Childhood Services Unit, Roving Caregivers Programme Summary, page 1.

72 Downes, J., Male Behaviour Change and Communication Intervention Project Questionnaire-2012, page 60.

73 This information was gathered from longitudinal qualitative and quantitative impact evaluation of the Roving Caregivers programme in St. Lucia commissioned by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, Wint, E. and Janssens, W. Study of the Roving Caregivers Programme Research Findings, 2008, page 8.

74 The data presented was gathered directly from the Ministry of Education.

Figure 18: Outreach of the roving caregivers programme from 2004 to 2011



The private sector and government operated centres provide early childhood development and education services to children within the age range of 1-4 years old; however, there are some cases where children are already 5 years old. These centres are categorized as “Daycare Centres”, providing child care services to children 1 to 2 years old, and “Preschools” which support children aged 3 to 4 years old. However, currently

early childhood centres, consisting of preschools and day care centres offer services to children below 5, with no distinction made in terms of age ranges from birth to 2 for day care, or 3+ for preschool. The table indicates that in 2015/16, the total number of ECE centres in St. Lucia was 142 with 42 registered daycare centres in operation, of which half are government-run.

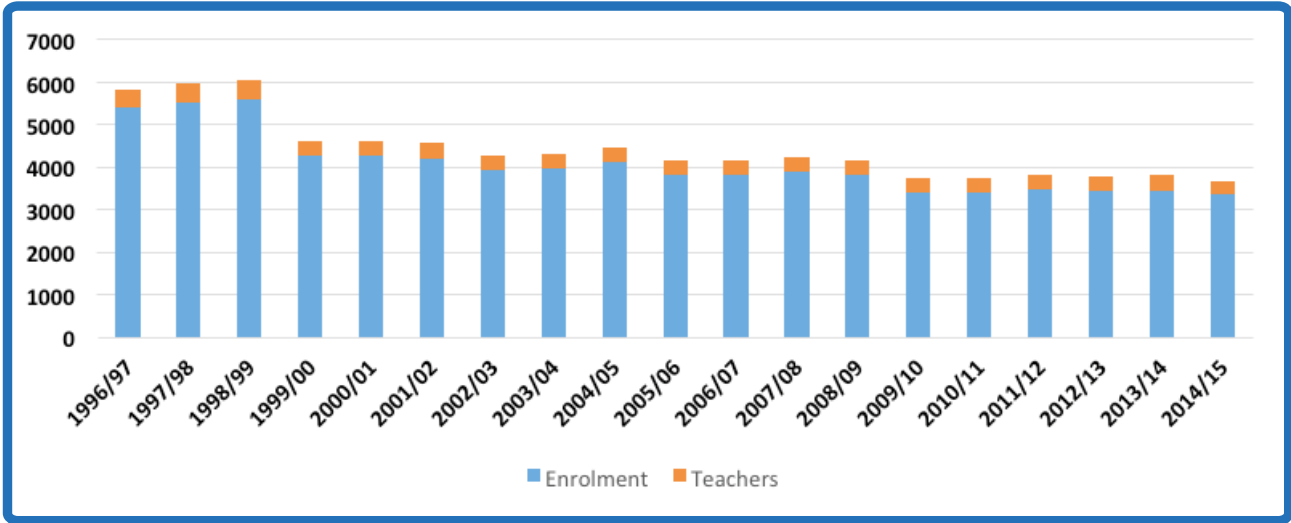
Table 5: Number of daycare and preschool centres for 2015/16

Type of service	Private sector	Public sector	Total
Preschool	100	0	100
Day Care	21	21	42
Total	121	21	142

Most parents begin to enroll their children into an ECD centre starting from the ages of over two (or 2+) to three with the intent of exposing them to at least two years of ECE. However, children can be enrolled as early as six weeks. Frequently, parents may enroll their children at age three and provide them with only one year of ECE which is an insufficient foundation to meet

the demands which come in Grade Kindergarten (Grade K). There was an enrolment of 3,353 students in 2014/15, out of which approximately 51percent were female (see table below). The teacher/student ratio remained at 1:10, and the net enrolment rate (NER) for the year 2014/15 was 43 percent.⁷⁵

Table 6: Number of children enrolled in preschool centres by gender and age for 2014/15

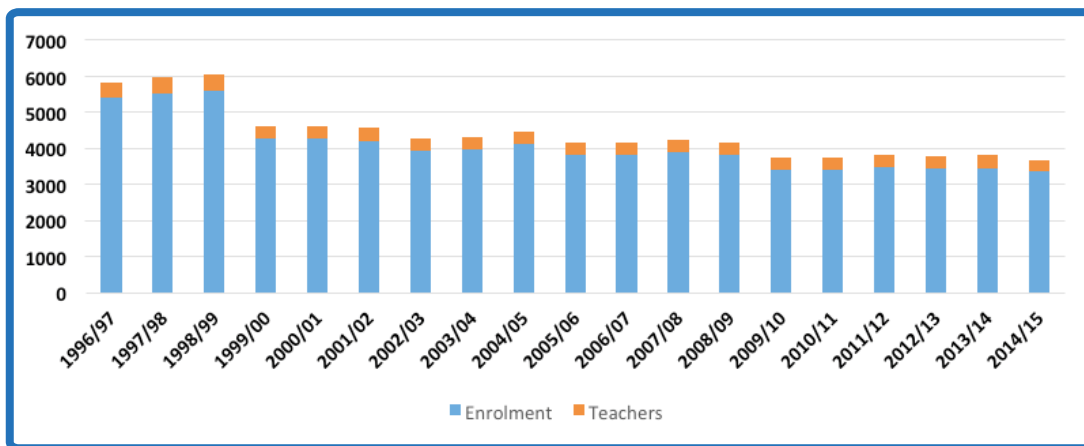


75 Government of Saint Lucia (2015) Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour, Data Management, Corporate Planning Unit, Education Statistical Digest, 2015, Past Trends, Present Position and Projections up to 2017/18.

While the number of teachers at the ECD level in 2014/15 totalled 327, there is no data available for the proportion of those teachers who are trained. As shown in the chart below, the OECS reports

total enrolment at the ECD level has been stable over the years with a student-to-teacher ratio of 10:1.

Figure 19: Student enrolment and number of teacher from 1996/97 to 2014/15



Although the ECE programmes work with families, community members and teachers, continued effort to build closer parent-teacher relationships is needed to motivate parents to construct active adult-child relationships and enhance their role as manager and supporter of their children’s early education. Promotion of better parenting and parent-child interaction can be accomplished using a mix of home visit, parental training, individual counselling and centre-based approaches.

Improving the quality of care will require increased investment in the number and level of training of roving care givers and teachers in the sector, particularly important to maintain the existing standard of teacher-student ratio as enrolment

rises. Institutionalizing the ECCHO initiative demands a firm commitment and continual support from the Government. The link to achieving universal ECD coverage is clear, as the ECCHO operates directly in communities with the potential to influence parents to enrol their children in ECD centres. Though health centres work hand-in-hand with the ECD Unit to identify children not attending preschool, it is vital to continue reaching all children, particularly those in rural areas where parents adhere to long-held cultural and traditional practices of keeping younger children at home. Finally, additional resources and a broader range of skill sets will be required to extend comprehensive coverage to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged (children living with disabilities and families in remote areas).

ECD needs to be prioritized across ministries such as health and environment, social services, family and gender affairs as well as education and human resource development. To this end, the role of a multidisciplinary Council on ECD could serve a pivotal role in supporting the delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of ECD services. Pursuant to the Education Act of 1999, a Council on early childhood education services is supposed to “advise” the Minister on policies to guide the implementation of the sector.⁷⁶ However, the Council is not operational in St. Lucia.

Primary education

Primary Education is compulsory for all children and the formal school age ranges from five to 11 years. However, quality education and the inequitable distribution of learning opportunities along with the generally unsatisfactory state of school structures hampered progress. The table below shows the monitoring indicators for the education sector from in St. Lucia from 2008/09 to 2014/15, and the Government has made significant progress towards providing quality primary school education

Table 7: Monitoring indicators for the primary schools from 2008/09 to 2014/15

Indicators	Baseline 2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)	102	102.3	102.8	102	101.9	101.4	100.4
Net Enrolment Rate (NER)	95.6	95.7	94.3	95.5	95.3	94.3	93.9
Dropout Rate	0.06	0.06		0.02	0.05	0.08	
Students participation in school feeding programme (percent)	26	37	38.3	39.9	42	45.3	44

⁷⁶ Government of Saint Lucia, (1999) Ministry of Education, Education Act No. 41, section 79, page 594.

There was a three percent decrease in enrolment from 16,263 in 2013/14 to 15,799 in 2014/15 (see table below). While it is recognised that primary school enrolment has been constantly decreasing for the last sixteen years, partly

attributed to a shrinking school-aged population, the expenditure per pupil is slowly rising at EC\$ 3,589 (for 2014/15). The male to female student ratio has remained at approximately 1:1.

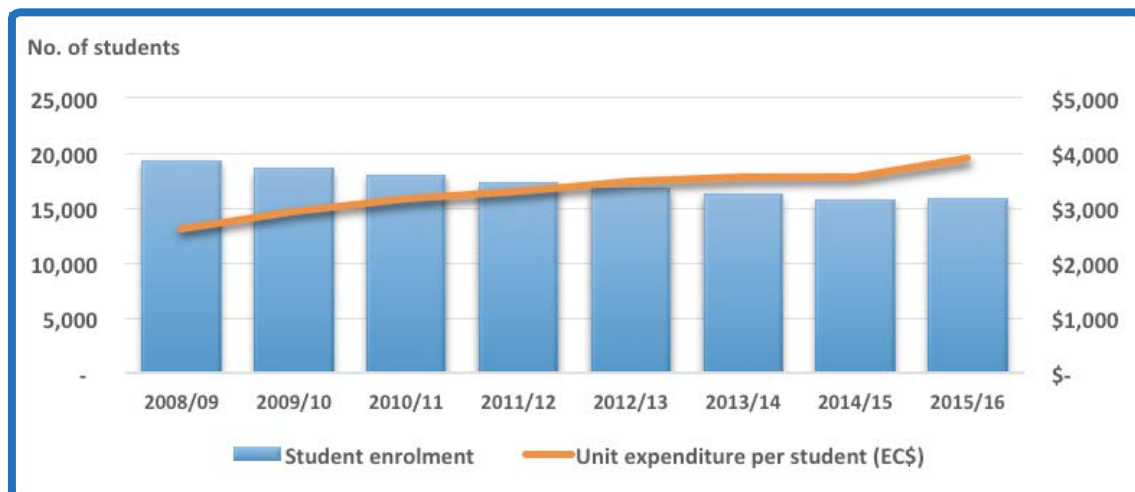
Table 8: Average size, student/teacher ratio, number of teachers, and unit expenditure per student

Academic Year	No. of Schools	Enrolment	No. of Teachers	Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Effective Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Teachers Per Student	Expenditure Per Pupil in EC\$
2013/14	74	16,268	1008	16	21	14	3,570
2014/15	74	15,799	1008	16	21	14	3,589

In 2014/15, the primary education recurrent expenditure was \$56.7 million, and although this was a 2.4 percent decrease from the previous

year, the unit expenditure per student (in EC\$) has slowly risen (see figure below).⁷⁷

Figure 20: Public primary school enrolment and the unit expenditure per student (in EC\$) by year



⁷⁷ The unit expenditure per student estimates for 2015/16 are projections and not actual expenditures.

The total enrolment in St. Lucia's 74 primary schools was 15,799 with a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 14:1.⁷⁸ The repetition rate for the same period was 3.22 percent for boys and 2.2 percent for girls, or 449 children. The primary net enrolment rate fluctuates between 94 and 95 percent, and these indicators suggest that there continues to be a number of under-aged and over-aged students in the primary schools. For example, in 2014/15, the under-aged and over-aged student percentages were at 22.2 percent and 12.2 percent of the public primary population respectively.⁷⁹

Getting children into primary school at the right age, ensuring that they progress smoothly and facilitating completion are key elements to

advance towards UPE. St. Lucia has yet to get all children into primary school at the official starting age (5 years). The age of school entry is an important factor for both grade repetition and early school leaving. Ensuring children enter primary school at the official age of 5 can be improved by strengthening the role of truancy officers and/or attendance counsellors as planned for in the Education Act.

Progression from kindergarten through grade 6 is equally important to achieve and sustain UPE. Overall, there were 449 repeaters at public primary schools in 2014/15, out of which 61 percent were boys (see the table below).

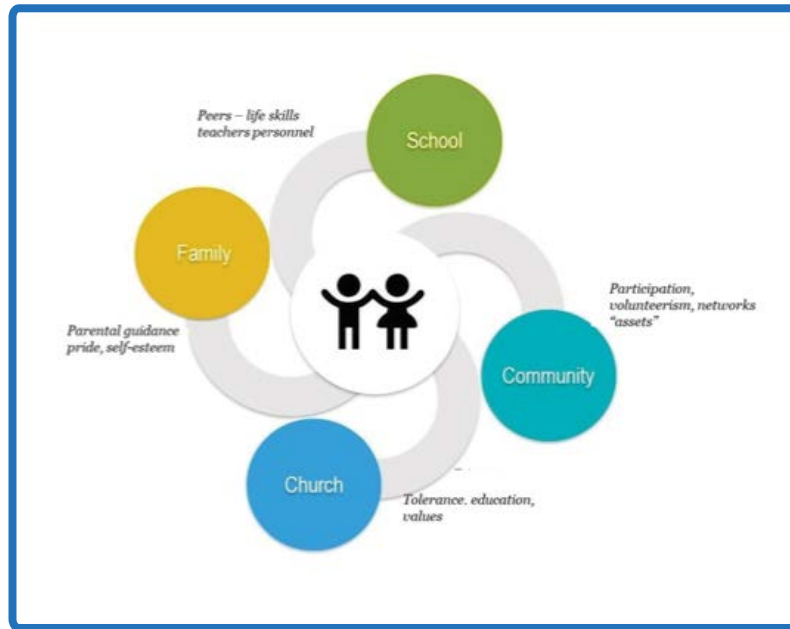
Table 9: Number of repeaters at the primary school level by grade and gender in 2014/15

Year	Repeaters by Grade										Total Dropouts	% Dropouts
	K	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9		
Male	144	20	18	22	11	28	29	n.a	n.a	n.a	272	3.4
Female	100	19	7	7	6	12	26	n.a	n.a	n.a	177	2.3
Total	244	39	25	29	17	40	55	n.a	n.a	n.a	449	2.8

78 Although there are 74 public primary schools, six (6) primary schools are private, totaling 80 primary schools.

79 Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), 'OECS Education Statistical Digest 2012–2013': Past Trends, Present Position, and Projections up to 2017/18, Education Development Management Unit, OECS Commission, Castries, St. Lucia, 2015.

Figure 21: Healthy connectedness



It should be noted that there was an increase of 24 percent in the number of repeaters from 2013/14 to 2014/15.⁸⁰ The fact that a high number of repeaters were from the Grade K, with 244 students, suggests that some Kindergarteners did not have an adequate foundation when transitioning from ECE to Grade K even though “an annual average of 82 percent of all Grade K students at the Infant and Primary schools have attended pre-school education.”⁸¹

School leavers⁸² were recorded as 12 dropouts, or 0.8 percent dropout rate, and 77 students who transferred out of St. Lucia during the academic year 2013/14, which signifies a notable increase in dropouts (50 percent) and roughly a 13 percent

fall in transfers, compared to the previous year. Males accounted from 42 percent of the dropouts and 56 percent of the transfers.

The Student Support Services Unit, within the Ministry of Education, targets assistance in the form of Bursaries and the School Feeding Programme to needy students in public primary schools. The School Feeding Programme is in operation in the majority of the 74 public primary schools, and in 2014/15, 6,879 students, or 44 percent, of the public primary students benefited. This was two percent higher than the previous academic year.

Nonetheless, inequalities begin very early, with the children at greatest disadvantage falling behind at the very start of their schooling experience. Prospects of children entering, progressing and completing primary education is directly linked to their household and community situations. The more positive the school experience, the more easily children can develop ‘healthy connectedness’ in other areas (see figure above). The degree of healthy connectedness children experience with parents, families, communities,

80 Ibid.

81 This figure was derived from a review period between 2010/11 to 2012/13. EFA (Education for All), Esther Chitolie-Joseph, Corporate Planning Unit, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour, St. Lucia: EFA National Review, 2015, page 27.

82 School leavers are defined as students who have left school by way of dropouts and transfers out of St. Lucia.

church and the learning environment can determine a successful start and completion of primary education. The more children experience healthy connectedness across all these areas, the more they are able to foster values such as mutual respect, responsibility and service within the community so as to access every opportunity to value themselves and to experience well-being.

Children living with high levels of poverty, disabilities and/or dysfunctional home environments are at greatest risk of experiencing psychological, social and developmental barriers during their primary years. Pupils coming from these environments are most likely to have poor attendance rates

due to transportation difficulties, for example. They perform poorly because of improper nutrition, attention deficit disorders and inability to concentrate due to dysfunctional family environments and domestic violence. They are more likely to come from single-parent households where adult supervision, guidance and support is limited or absent. Most teaching staff are not sufficiently trained or experienced to address these issues with these children being left behind.

The Child Friendly School (CFS) concept, launched in 2009 in St. Lucia, has expanded to 35 primary schools in 6 school districts.

For the academic year 2014/15, of the 1,008 public primary school teachers, the percentage of female teachers remained at 86 percent. The total number of trained teachers slightly increased from 910 in 2013/14 to 921 in 2014/15, but still representing 91 percent. A trained teacher is defined as a teacher who successfully completes a recognised programme in teacher education (such as the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College). Moreover, there are 248 “specialist” teachers (e.g., special needs education, music, French and Physical Education). In spite of these impressive achievements, however, there remains a strong need for teachers to have capacities in providing specialised counselling services to support their effective response to children facing hardship and learning difficulties.

The OECS Education Sector Strategy 2012–2021 speaks of “pastoral care for learners” as a cross-cutting strategy, a means to improve leadership management and accountability, teachers and professional development, teaching and learning,

and curriculum and assessment.⁸³ This ‘child-centred’ approach calls for actions that proactively identify and target children at risk of social, emotional and/or physical harm to reduce the intensity, severity and duration of risk behaviour. The strategy is grounded in concepts similar to CFS and life-skills training, all designed to build and strengthen the dimensions of ‘connectedness’ all children need to successfully pursue and profit from lifelong learning opportunities.

Secondary education

In 2014/15, there were 23 public secondary schools with 12,861 students enrolled; a decrease of 2.7 percent from the previous year.⁸⁴ The male to female student ratio remained at approximately 1:1. The table below, presenting the ESDP indicators for 2008/09 through 2013/14, shows that the GER remained around 96 percent, while the NER decreased from 88 percent in 2013/14 to 85 percent in 2014/15.⁸⁵

Table 10: Public secondary education indicators from 2008/09 to 2014/15

Indicators	Baseline 2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
GER	94	94	98.4	99	96.3	95.8	94.6
NER	82.6	83.6	86.6	89.8	87.7	88.2	85.3
Dropout Rate	1.6	1.7		1.8	1.45	1.29	

83 Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), ‘OECS Education Sector Strategy 2012–2021’, Education Development Management Unit, OECS Commission, Castries, St. Lucia, May 2012.

84 In addition to the 23 public secondary schools, there are two private schools, totaling 25 schools.

85 It must be noted that according to the OECS Education Statistical Digest, there were 377 students aged 12 to 16 enrolled in primary schools, which affected the secondary school NER.

The student transition rate from primary to secondary school was over 95 percent. The repetition rate was 0.74 for boys and 0.47 for girls. Of the 208 school leavers (in 2013/14), the number of dropouts decreased from 180 in 2012/13 to 148 in 2013/14. As in the previous years, the male dropout rate was higher than that for females, wherein males accounted for approximately 61 percent of the total dropouts. It is recognized that Forms 4 and 5 continue to record the highest percentage of dropouts accounting for 70 percent of the total dropouts.

In terms of knowledge acquisition, an important dimension of quality education, the overall pass rate for the General and Technical Proficiency levels (2015) is used as a critical indicator. The pass rate of the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence Examinations (CCSLC) was more than 73 percent, almost a two-point increase compared to 2014. This examination has six subjects, including English and math, and this indicator of achievement means that of the 1,721 students who sat for the examination, 73 percent have the minimum matriculations required to enter tertiary education.

The recurrent expenditure on Secondary Education in 2014/15 was EC\$65.3 million, a decrease of 4.5 percent, resulting in the expenditure per pupil of EC\$5,077 for 2014/15.

The situation regarding trained teachers at secondary level is slightly different to that of teaching staff in primary schools. There were 1,023 secondary school teachers in 2014/15, and 72 percent were trained which is lower compared to the 91 percent observed for primary school teachers. Most of the teachers (71 percent) were female. The Public Secondary School teacher to student ratio is 1:13.

While there are three welfare programmes available to public secondary school students (i.e.,

the Transportation Subsidy Programme, the Book Rental Programme and the Bursary Programme), students only benefitted from the Transportation Subsidy Programme in 2014/15. Currently, the profile of subjects offered at secondary level is changing with increased offerings of TVET and innovative curriculum changes. For example, secondary core courses include language arts, mathematics, science, social sciences, health and family life education (HFLE) and visual and performing arts. With TVET, discussed below, courses include cosmetology, food preparation, garment making, electricity, woodwork, business, and agriculture.

Post-secondary and tertiary education

Upon completion of secondary education, a student may either go to work or pursue further studies at a post-secondary or tertiary institution. Two public post-secondary institutions, the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC) and the Vieux-Fort Comprehensive Secondary school, have campuses located in different parts of the island. As per the EFA report, the transition rate from “secondary to post-secondary education is unavailable”, however, it is estimated that about 42 percent of all secondary school graduates transit into a post-secondary institution on the island. The situation with tertiary education is that the government has invested in expanding the programme offerings of SALCC’s online programmes rather than in developing its physical infrastructure. Online alternatives have received greater attention recently, and so students may also pursue tertiary studies with the “Open Campus”, which is in partnership with the University of the West Indies (UWI). This is accredited and offers a wide range of degree programmes and courses. While this education model is intended to accommodate persons who require flexibility, because they have families or are working and thus cannot travel to attend university courses, the main challenge is the cost of tuition, particularly for males. “Females continue to dominate males in accessing post-secondary and tertiary education.”⁸⁶

86 EFA (Education for All), Esther Chitolie-Joseph, Corporate Planning Unit, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour, St. Lucia: EFA National Review, 2015, page 53.

Finally, four private universities, the Monroe College and three medical universities, are United States-based and cater to local, regional and international students. Approximately three quarters of the students from the Monroe College are from St. Lucia, whereas most of the students (60 percent) attracted to the three Medical Universities are from the United States and India.”⁸⁷

Technical and vocational education and training

Caribbean youth face serious challenges in the labour market as a result of inadequate skills. The focus for general formal education in St. Lucia, as with most Eastern Caribbean nations, has

been oriented towards academic results rather than vocational or technical outcomes. Some would argue that this is a residue of the colonial past, which left in place a British-type system for grammar school. The educational models were formal, with an emphasis on classic study in literature, science and math.

Interestingly, this was during a period when the economy of these islands was largely defined by an agricultural sector, which employed a majority of the workforce in St. Lucia (i.e., banana market). Later, as the region promoted tourism as another major source of income and acknowledged the importance of sustainable use of natural resources, educational systems were slow to keep up with these changes in the workforce requirements. Major education policy changes were called for to fill the skill gaps exposed by the changes in the Caribbean economic landscape and changing global production patterns. This need for change is accelerated by the drive for a more competitive edge and the advent of technological applications for improved production.

The CARICOM Regional Strategy for Workforce Development and Economic Competitiveness was conceived with a vision of “Sustainable economic prosperity through the creation of a globally competitive regional workforce enabled by a market-responsive education and training system”.⁸⁸

In St. Lucia, TVET is mainly offered to young people and adults through the SALCC, CARE,⁸⁹ National Skills Development Centre (NSDC),⁹⁰ and Secondary Schools (e.g., Vieux-Fort Comprehensive Secondary school). In response to an expressed need for certification of skills and the introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs), more persons are currently able to obtain certifications. In addition, some employees are expressing the need to be trained and certified “where they are” – on the job. This need was addressed by the introduction of the Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) process where the occupational standards are applied in the assessments and possible literacy or

87 Ibid., page 58.

88 The strategy revolves around seven logically sequenced components: TVET redefined and promoted as an agent of workforce development and economic competitiveness; TVET integrated with general education for life and livelihood; a CARICOM training system; labour market intelligence of workforce development; career guidance and counselling; instructor training; and TVET financing: public private partnerships.

89 CARE aims to foster positive attitudes in adolescents towards themselves, others, work and work-related situations, thus empowering them for a more wholesome independent living (CARE website). It also seeks to train them to manage their own developing sexuality, both physically and emotionally and provide them with a marketable skill to aid their search for employment. The Programme is implemented in two phases; In Phase 1 the students participate in a one-year Adolescent Development Programme which provides opportunities for growth spiritually, physically, intellectually, culturally, emotionally and socially; In Phase 2 they are given the opportunity to spend at least one year of training in an income generating skill of their choice. The total number students at CARE have decreased over the years from its highest of 325 in 2002/03 to 145 in 2012/13. CARE began with a six centres around the island; However, mainly due to financial challenges in running those Centres, in 2006/07 two centres were merged into one.

90 According to the NSDC Outlook, their main focus is to instill the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge in individuals for career success. This includes career counselling, training in soft skills, technical and vocational skills, job training and placement. The target group includes displaced banana farmers, school dropouts, teenage mothers and youth at risk. In order to achieve its mandate, the NSDC works closely with the private and public sectors which includes social partners and funding agencies (both internal and external) to provide the necessary training in order to create a skilled and marketable workforce. Since its commencement in 2001, the NSDC have implemented about eight Training Projects funded by various agencies.

skills gaps addressed through further training. The responses to these requirements, training methods have been very good. “Young people seem highly motivated to take charge of their own learning.”⁹¹

One of the challenges still facing TVET and the training of youth and adults is the absence of written policies. Although in the absence of such documents there exists guidelines governing adult education programmes, it is not sufficient in light of the changing learning needs of individuals. In responding to the changing learning needs there must be some consideration to the needs of industry, which requires some degree of Labour Market research. One typical example is the rapid change in the ICT landscape, thereby forcing the rapid response in the content and design of training programmes. Another challenge is the effect of the downturn in the global economy especially in the construction sector. This has shrunk job openings and thus affected the job placement component of the various training earlier discussed, leading to increased unemployment. Several students at secondary level are likely to earn CVQ certificates. However, a major challenge is the lack of a postgraduate placement process to allow graduates to quickly practice what they have learned.

Another concern is the low or irregular male participation in technical courses. The observed high secondary school drop-out rates for males have negative consequences for unemployment and poverty. The overall figure for unemployment among the 15–25 age group is 44 and 39 percent for females and males, respectively

which demonstrates the persistent barriers to employment among adolescents and youth in St. Lucia.⁹²

The major shortcoming in building a successful TVET programme is the lingering perception that technical education is for ‘slow learners’ or students who cannot ‘follow along the mainstream’. Changing this attitude requires long-term advocacy effort. The Government’s commitment to increased TVET is based on the understanding that it is not merely a means of reducing drop-out rates, particularly among males, but is a cornerstone in building a strong skill base among the workforce needed to become more competitive. Basic education skills in reading and writing are essential for successful completion of TVET courses, which require comprehensive mastering of complex concepts communicated through technical textbooks.

Education for children with special needs

Though the Government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 22 September, 2011, it has not ratified it. The Ministry of Education has expressed its commitment to providing quality education to those with various impairments by providing much of the necessary human and physical resources. The official numbers of children with disabilities were recorded in the Digest, which outlines the five different types of disabilities, the number of educators, and the teacher-to-student ratio.⁹³ The total enrolment for 2014/15 was 361, of which the highest recorded disability (77 percent) was learning disabilities, mentally challenged, and autistic followed by multiple handicaps (12 percent). Forty-one percent of students enrolled were female, and out of the 70 students enrolled in the Blind Welfare Association, 23 were integrated within the main school system at both primary and secondary school levels. The teacher-to-student ratio at the Special Education Centres was 1:6. The total number of teachers is 64, of which 24 per cent are trained (in 2014/15) in various areas of specialization.⁹⁴

91 EFA (Education for All), Esther Chitolie-Joseph, Corporate Planning Unit, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour, St. Lucia: EFA National Review, 2015, page 66.

92 St. Lucian Voice article.

93 The types of disabilities include: (1) Learning disabilities, mentally challenged and autistic, (2) hearing impaired, (3) visually impaired, (4) multiple handicaps, and (5) physically challenged.

94 Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), ‘OECS Education Statistical Digest 2012–2013’: Past Trends, Present Position, and Projections up to 2017/18, Education Development Management Unit, OECS Commission, Castries, St. Lucia, 2015.

One identified bottleneck that weakens the ongoing effort of health professionals to monitor and address the physical and developmental progress of children through routine milestone visits to local health facilities is the limited number and quality of counselling professionals providing services to the health and ECD sectors. Specialized staff are needed for early detection, diagnosis and treatment of intellectual, developmental and psychological disabilities. Many disabilities can be overcome if detected and treated early.

Using available space in primary schools to establish ECD centres appears to be a cost-effective strategy, making savings in human resources and capital. Additionally, this model offers a somewhat seamless transition for children moving from preschool to primary school, and the convenience and ease of access is well received by parents with children in both.

The question of sufficient teaching and learning resources and materials to meet the demands of existing centres and provide for the expansion of services should be examined as well. A major challenge facing the Government is funding the appropriately skilled human and financial resources it takes to improve positive outcomes for the most vulnerable young children and to determine the most cost-effective strategies and efficient means required to redress these disparities. The Government's contribution to ECE centres is extremely important to ensure equity in the delivery of services. In order to institutionalize these services, a basis for standards regarding licensing, fee structures, teacher training and curriculum needs to shift from the existing guidance document towards an approved national policy (draft policy not accessible at the writing of this report).

Children well-being (violence at school and participation)

The fundamental challenge in assessing school violence prevention strategies in the Caribbean is that, although a multitude of programmes exist, there is very little evaluated evidence of such interventions to guide policymakers and practitioners in identifying their relative effectiveness (including cost-effectiveness).

As mentioned above, school, community, church and family 'connectedness' are fundamental in reducing risky behaviour among adolescents, including violence at school. School connectedness is pivotal when it comes to creating an enabling environment in which adolescents can establish and maintain healthy connections with school and their communities. Relationships that help to form and sustain connectedness include those with teachers, counsellors and administrators, janitors, coaches, lunchroom servers, office assistants, counsellors, parents and school volunteers. They all have the potential of fostering the positive attitude needed to establish a bond between the pupil and the school and community. But several factors also depend on contributions from the institution itself: high academic rigour and expectations, supportive learning, positive adult-student relationships and physical and emotional safety.

Without this enabling environment, the stress of living in poverty, dysfunctional households and/or with a disability can be overwhelming and lead to harmful and risky behaviours such as violence, bullying and harassment in school. Clear policies, programmes and procedures on the school ethos, culture, structures and student welfare can be important to create an enabling environment, including a statement on processes for preventing and dealing with incidents such as violence, victimization, bullying, alienation, etc. Programmes/strategies to create a positive school culture and empower student participation are also helpful (e.g., peer support groups, giving students

a role in decision-making bodies, peer mediation and teacher teams working with student groups on school issues). School assessment and reporting policy should go beyond budget and training/qualification indicators and incorporate elements of health, well-being, connectedness, resiliency and academic care. Democratic decision-making

bodies/boards, parent-teacher associations (PTAs), meetings, newsletters and school-based and extra-curricular activities should be included in the accountabilities of the school leadership. School discipline policy should be reviewed with an emphasis on more ethical practices and harm minimization in dealing with behavioural issues.

6 The Right to Health



Children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily (CRC, article 6).

Children have the right to good quality health care – the best health care possible – to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy (CRC, article 24)

Mothers should have appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care (CRC, article 24)

The government regards the pursuit of good health as a fundamental human right and ensures that health policies are consistent with developmental, educational and socio-economic and health promotion concepts. The private sector is relatively small leaving the public health sector to dominate the management and delivery of health services in St. Lucia. Many health professionals work both in the public and private sectors. The services provided by the Ministry of Health are based on three levels of care, namely health centres (primary care), polyclinics (primary care support and community secondary care services with extended hours), and hospitals (secondary and limited tertiary care services). This structure as well as pharmacies and two general hospitals ensures decentralized services throughout the eight health regions. The structure was developed with the vision that polyclinics would provide a higher level of services than health centers, such as laboratory, x-ray, and after-hours services.

Construction of the New National Hospital (NNH) is near completion and is designed to provide

quality health care services to all clients in an efficient manner. The NNH was slated to open in the second quarter of 2012, but has been delayed and in late-2016 was nearing the end of the 'equipping' stage. Because of progressive improvements in health planning, delivery and public education systems, children in St. Lucia have better chances than ever to reach adulthood. The country provides one of the highest standards of free health care (including pre-natal care) systems in the Caribbean.

Access to medicines is fee-based for all residents and does not deny access to services or essential medicines due to inability to pay. Patients suffering from diabetes and hypertension receive free medicines in the public sector. With regards to financing, the MOH and the National Insurance Corporation (NIC) provide the main revenue streams for the operation of public health services. Services delivered in government-owned facilities are fully funded from general tax revenues. Basic services delivered at the primary care level are free with most hospital charging a user fee for

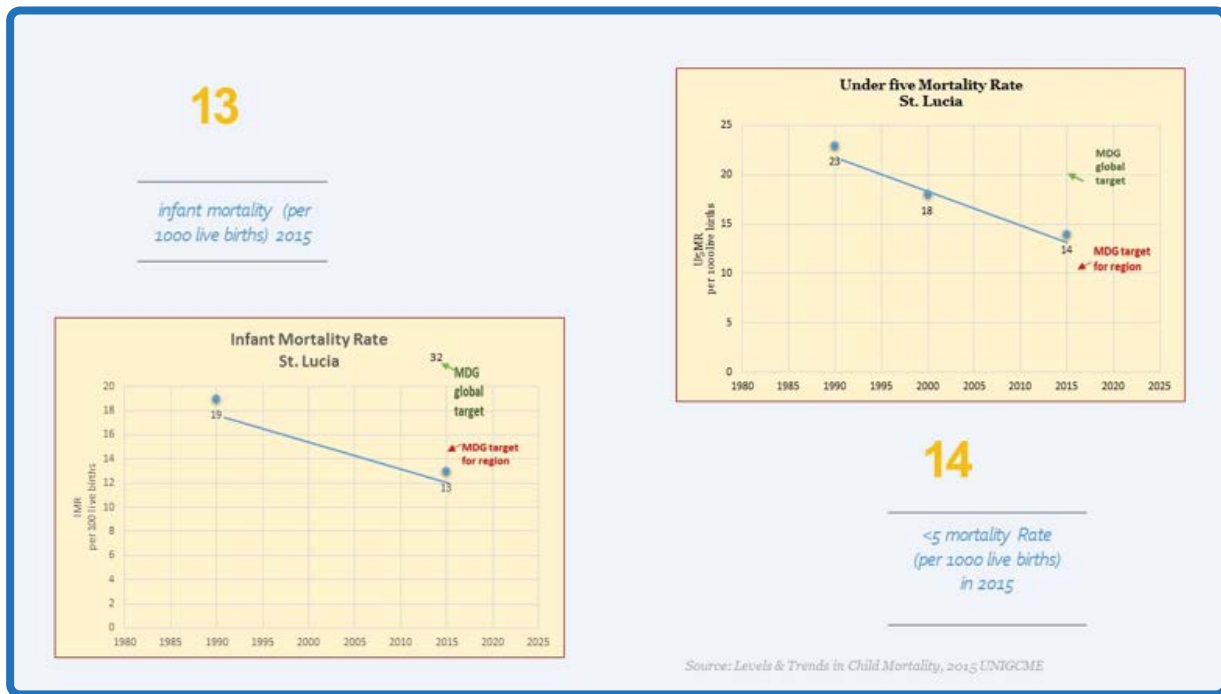
services. In the early 2000s, the government pursued Universal Health Care (UHC) as a means to ensure all people have access to services regardless of ability to pay and to ensure the quality of services.

Public spending on health was 3.5 per cent of GDP in 2010 for St. Lucia, the equivalent to US\$503 per capita. According to surveys conducted between 1997 and 2010, there were 47 doctors, and 216 nurses and midwives per 100,000 people.⁹⁵ One hundred per cent of births were attended by qualified health staff during 2007-2012 and in 2012, 99 per cent of one-year-olds were immunised with one dose of measles.

In 2010 94 per cent of the country’s population was using an improved drinking water source and 65 per cent had access to adequate sanitation facilities.

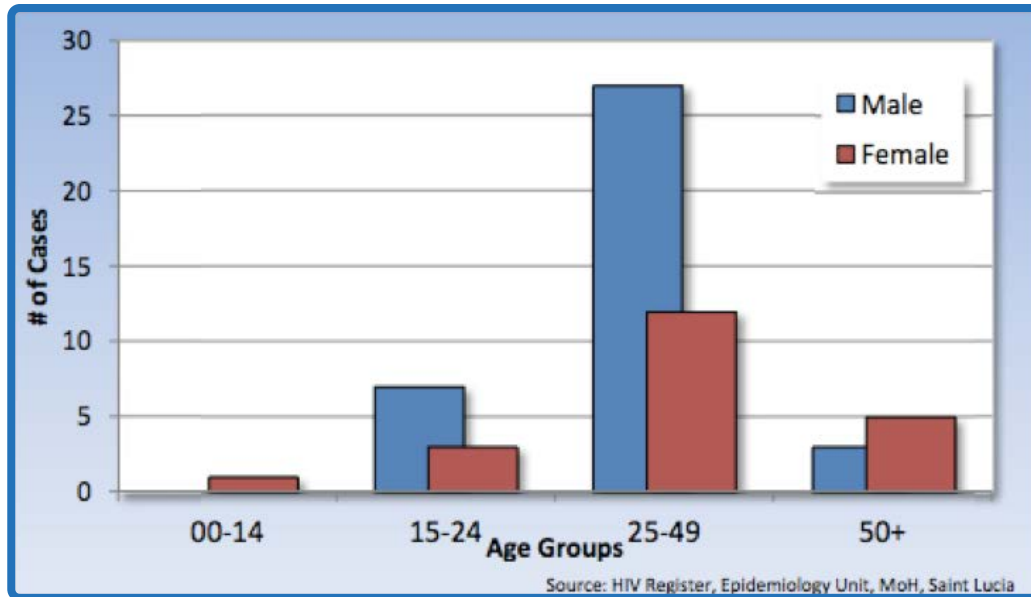
Child mortality, is most commonly used to measure the state of children’s wellbeing. Whilst the IMR and the U3MR has consistently declined since the 1990’s and is hopeful as illustrated in figure 22 below, more effort is required to build on the MDG achievements and ensure children live to pursue healthy lives and well-being as adults. The three most common causes of death for children under 5 years in 2010 included congenital anomalies, prematurity and birth asphyxia.

Figure 22. Infant and child mortality



95 Pan American Health, Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), 2012

Figure 23. Newly diagnosed cases of HIV infection by age and gender, 2014



HIV/AIDS

The social-cultural environment contains both protective and risk factors that could influence levels of SRH issues including HIV/AIDS prevalence. Protective factors that come together to limit related risks include strong adherence to religious values, close parental monitoring, and a sense of social cohesion and cultural identity. Risk factors are associated with some categories of tourists and others passing through the country, CSA, participation in transactional sex and commercial sex.

Newly diagnosed cases of HIV are presented in the table above.⁹⁶ In the past five years (2010-

2015) there has been 0 cases of mother-to-child transmission. Sixty-four per cent of the new cases are in males. The 2013-2014 UNAIDS reports notes that the number of persons reporting MSM transmission have increased since the past reporting period.⁹⁷ Youth (15-24 years) accounted for 17 per cent of total new infections (3 females and 7 males).⁹⁸

Non communicable Diseases

The major shift taking place in the field of health has been described as a rapid dietary and epidemiological transition where Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (CNCDs) have replaced malnutrition and infectious diseases as major health issues. The shift towards prevention and treatment of CNCDs requires a very different approach to meet the new supply, demands and quality standards.

⁹⁶ UNAIDS, HIV/AIDS on-line reporting, 2013-2014

⁹⁷ IBID

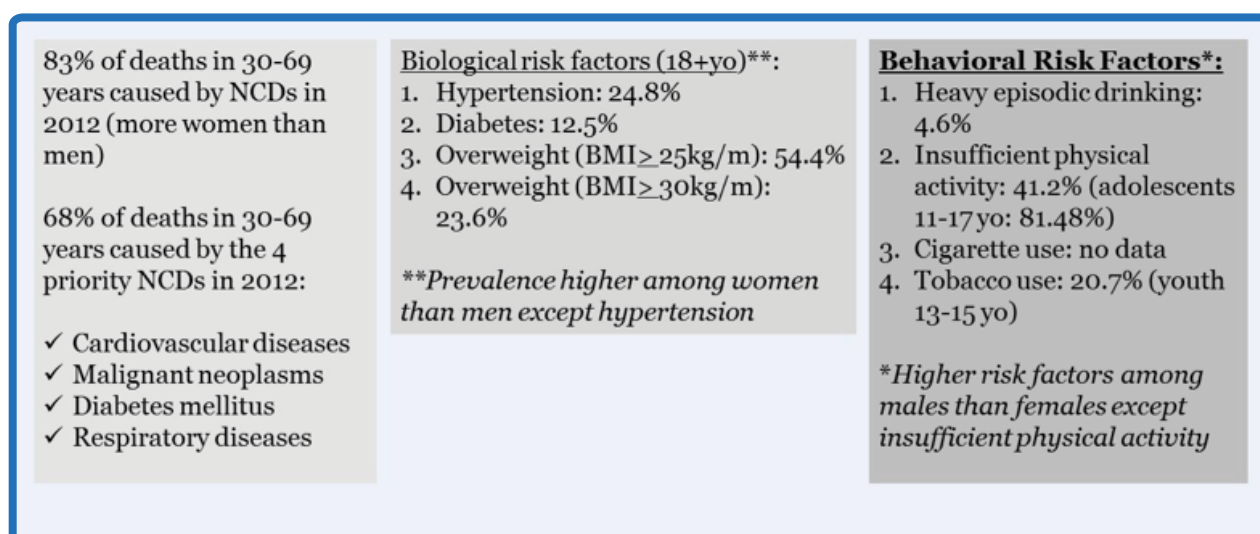
⁹⁸ IBID.

The functioning health system described at the beginning of this chapter is one largely designed to meet the demands of the struggle to combat malnutrition and preventable infectious diseases. However, with St. Lucia's ageing population and the rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases additional demands are placed on the health care system. According to the PAHO 2012 County Report, CNCDs, which include heart disease, stroke, diabetes mellitus, chronic pulmonary disease and some cancers, rank high among the leading causes of illness, disability and death among adults in St. Lucia. On the other hand, communicable diseases have declined as the leading causes of morbidity and death.

The public health system is struggling to

maintain relevance for optimal performance in an environment where control of CNCDs requires: i) a different lot of equipment (lab set-ups and x-ray tools) needed to investigate and diagnose NCDs using delicate imaging instruments, at both the central and sub-national levels; ii) a change in outreach strategies including rigorous efforts to equip health personnel with skills to monitor and communicate for behavioral change; iii) and, a higher quality of human resources prepared to handle patients dependent on drugs and alcohol as a result of stressful home and work environments. Additionally, unlike the fight against infectious diseases, effort to reduce incidence of CNCDs will not produce immediate results but requires long and sustained input to register significant change.

Figure 24. Chronic Non Communicable Diseases



In 2014, life expectancy at birth was estimated at 74.69 (77.41 years for male and 80.28 for females).⁹⁹ While the factors driving health care costs are complex, the rising prevalence of CNCDs is one of the main drivers along with occurrence of new and re-emerging communicable diseases. Also, Saint Lucians are accustomed to a well performing health care system, there is the expectation for services to be low cost yet equal to those in large industrialized countries. This is currently challenging the government as St. Lucia embarks on discussions about health care financing, particularly at a moment when fiscal space is decreasing and health care costs are

rapidly rising. Making the economic case to invest now will save millions of dollars in the future. For example, servicing CNCD related to diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and respiratory disease and the premature mortality, morbidity and disability is estimated to have increased in the cost of potential years of loss life in the region by 65per cent in 2004 compared to 27per cent for injuries and violence and HIV/AIDS 25per cent.¹⁰⁰ The bid to change behaviours and attitudes regarding the production and consumption of nutritious foods is challenged by the need for resolved political will, sustained resources and considerable time.

99 CDB, Country Gender Assessment, St. Lucia, 2014

100 CARICOM, Strategic Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of NCDs for countries of the Caribbean Community, 2011-2015

7 The SDGs and a New Framework for Children



While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set the international development framework for action until 2015, United Nations' Member States had agreed at the Rio +20 Conference to create a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to coordinate the development efforts post-2015. The SDGs represent a new framework for global development that was officially adopted at the SDG Summit in September 2015.¹⁰¹ The process

of developing the SDGs was not limited to the United Nations; it involved vast participation from different stakeholders from civil society, private enterprises and citizens around the world.¹⁰² There are 17 Goals (see Table 12) and 169 targets. They are action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable.¹⁰³ Indicators to measurable progress on outcomes have also been adopted.

Table 12. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14: Conserve and use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

¹⁰¹ UNICEF 2014.

¹⁰² For more on the civil society engagement in the post-2015 debate, see www.beyond2015.org/ (accessed 18 June 2015).

¹⁰³ Based on <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal> (accessed 18 June 2015).

8 Conclusion and Recommendations

Legislative and policy framework

- Approve and implement Draft ECD Policy
- Accelerate the final drafting and approval of the four OECS “Model Bills” currently under discussion, including those dealing with juvenile justice and child protection.
- Complete and implement draft regulations for the Status of Children legislation.
- Develop and implement a Juvenile Justice policy that includes guidelines for training of all staff working with juveniles across departments and in residential centres.
- Develop and promote policies that eliminate corporal punishment, keep children in school as well as policies that encourage positive parenting approaches.

Survival rights

- Make greater use of family planning and reduce teenage pregnancies through greater use of Community Health Aids and decentralised health services.
- Develop and implement strategies to combat CNCs and encourage healthy living.

Development rights

- Invest more in second chance learning opportunities such as TVET and entrepreneurial training that address youth unemployment and contribute to enhancing access and retention of decent work.

Protection rights

- Design and implement formal diversion project based on review of lessons learned from the Court Diversion Programme launched in 2010 but recently discontinued.
- Follow through on the intention to put into operation a residential facility for girls.
- Strengthen the enforcement of the mandatory reporting provisions in the Criminal Code
- Complete and adopt the manual for foster care and adoption procedures.
- Examine the question of adequate human resources for the Foster Care Programme.
- Examine lessons learned from the successes of the “Rectification Fair” to provide birth registration and correction opportunities
- Facilitate closer collaboration between Probation Department, Human Services and others to practice and promote full and efficient coverage of child protection services

The SDGs and the future

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were officially adopted in September 2015, represent a new framework for global development. The aim is to create a global movement to continue the work begun with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as advance towards new commitments. Nations

should therefore start framing their development plans and policies for the next years based on this globally agreed development agenda.

For St. Lucia, that means some strategic changes in terms of producing and using data.

Information systems that collate, manage and generate information should be easily accessible and shared across different agencies and with partners to produce evidence-based decisions and a national research agenda that fills the notable gaps in the existing body of knowledge.

Bibliography

Bernard Van leer Foundation, Wint, E. and Janssens, W., Study of the Roving Caregivers Programme Research Findings, 2008.

CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), Country Gender Assessment, prepared by Aleah N. Ranjitsingh with Rawwida Baksh and Associates, January 2016.
<http://www.caribank.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CountryGenderAssessmentStLucia.pdf>, accessed on 19 September, 2016

CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), Country Strategy Paper: St. Lucia 2013-2016.

CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), Poverty Assessment Report: St. Lucia, prepared by Kairi Consultants Ltd., page 2. https://www.unicef.org/lac/spbarbados/Planning/national/St.Lucia/CDB-St.Lucia_POVERTYper cent20ASSESSMENTper cent20REPORT_extract.doc, accessed on 19 September, 2016.

CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), Annual Report: 2015.
http://www.caribank.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CDB_AnnualReport2015.pdf, accessed on 19 September, 2016.

Central Statistics Office (CSO). St. Lucia 2010 Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Report (Updated April 2011).
<http://catalog.ihnsn.org/index.php/catalog/4328>, accessed on 19 September, 2016.

CICAD (Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission), Comparative Analysis of Student's Drug Use in Caribbean Countries: A report on student drug use in 12 Caribbean countries, Organization of American States, Washington, DC, 2010.

Commission on Sustainable Development, 'Review of the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy: Report of the Secretary-General', E/CN.17/2010/9, 1 April 2010.

Downes, Andrew S. and Doris A. Downes, 'The Millennium Development Goals in the Eastern Caribbean: A progress report', United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), December 2003.

Downes, J., Male Behaviour Change and Communication Intervention Project Questionnaire-2012.

Engel, Patrice L. and Maureen M. Black, The Effect of Poverty on Child Development and Educational Outcomes, New York Academy of Sciences, NY, 2008.

Ennulat, Christine, 'Shining a Light on Gender-Based Violence in Four Countries', Child Fund, 2014, <https://www.childfund.org/Content/NewsDetail/2147488129/>, accessed 6 March 2017.

EFA (Education for All), Esther Chitolie-Joseph, Corporate Planning Unit, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour, St. Lucia: EFA National Review, 2015.
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002300/230028E.pdf>, accessed on 22 March, 2017.

Gimenez, Lea; St. Catherine, Edwin; Karver, Jonathan; Odawara, Rei. 2015. The Aftermath of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis in the Eastern Caribbean : The Impact on the St Lucia Labor Market. World Bank Group, Washington, DC.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21602>, accessed on 12 December, 2016

Government of St. Lucia, Ministry of Education, Education Act No. 41, 1999.

Government of St. Lucia, Ministry of Education, Early Childhood Policy, 2013.

Government of St. Lucia, Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment, A National Roadmap to Transformative Social Protection, 2015.

Government of St. Lucia, Budget Analysis for Investment in Children in St. Lucia, 2015.

Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment and Central Statistics Office and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 'St. Lucia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2012: Final Report', Castries, St. Lucia, 2014.

St. Lucia Bureau of Standard (2014) Code of Practice for Establishment and Operation of Early Childhood Development Centres.

Government of St. Lucia, Country Poverty Assessment 2005/2006.

Government of St. Lucia, Central Statistical Office of St. Lucia, St. Lucia Population and Housing Census 2010, 2014.

Government of St. Lucia, (2008) Ministry of Education and Culture, the Education Sector Development Plan for 2009-2014 and Beyond.

Government of St. Lucia, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour Education Sector Development Plan for 2015-2020, 2014.

Humanium, 'Children of St. Lucia: Realizing children's rights in St. Lucia, 2013, <http://www.humanium.org/en/americas/st-lucia/>, accessed 20 March, 2017

James, Vanus, The Economic Contribution of the Copyright-Based Industries in the Member States of the Organization of East Caribbean States: Potential and policies for economic transformation, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Geneva, 2012.

Jones, Adele D. and Ena Trotman Jemmott, Child Sexual Abuse in the Eastern Caribbean: The report of a study carried out across the Eastern Caribbean during the period October 2008 to June 2009, Action for Children, University of Huddersfield and United Nations Children's Fund, Huddersfield and London, 2009.

Manitou Incorporated, 'The Formative Evaluation of the HighScope Pre-School Curriculum Reform Programme Report', UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area, Christ Church, Barbados, 2015.

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), 'OECS Education Sector Strategy 2012–2021', Education Development Management Unit, OECS Commission, Castries, St. Lucia, May 2012.

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), 'OECS Education Statistical Digest 2012–2013': Past Trends, Present Position, and Projections up to 2017/18, Education Development Management Unit, OECS Commission, Castries, St. Lucia, 2015.

PAHO (Pan American Health Organization and WHO Regional Council for the Americas), 'Plan of Action for the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Adolescents', PAHO, Washington, DC, October 2014.

Scott, Ewan, Karl Theodore and Althea La Foucade, 'Working Poor in the Caribbean: With a focus on Trinidad and Tobago', Labour Market and Poverty Studies Unit, International Labour Organization, Geneva, 2010.

Sumner, Andy, 'Global Poverty and the New Bottom Billion: What if three-quarters of the world's poor live in middle-income countries?', Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, UK, September 2010.

UN DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), 'Migration Profiles: Common set of indicators – St. Lucia, 2014. <https://esa.un.org/migmgmprofiles/indicators/files/St.Lucia.pdf>, accessed 20 March, 2017.

UNDESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) Report of the Capacity Building Workshop and Expert Group Meeting on Integrated Approaches to Sustainable Development Planning and Implementation, 27-29 May 2015, New York
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/8506IASDpercent20Workshoppercent20Reportpercent2020150703.pdf>, accessed 20 March, 2017.

UN Human Rights Council, 'Joint Statement on Ending Acts of Violence Related Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity', 22 March 2011, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4eb8f32e2.html>, accessed 10 March 2017.

UNIGME (United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation), Levels and Trends in Child Mortality: Report 2015, UNICEF, New York, 2015.
https://www.unicef.org/media/files/IGME_Report_Final2.pdf, accessed 21 March 2017.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), Human Development Report 2014: Sustaining human progress – Reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience, UNDP, New York, 2016.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), State of the World's Children, 2016.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), St. Lucia, 2015 Child Protection Statistical Digest.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Migration Profiles. <https://esa.un.org/MigGMGProfiles/indicators/files/SaintLucia.pdf>, accessed on 15 December 2015.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Budget Analysis for Investments in Children in St. Lucia.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in Brief: For adolescents', UNICEF, New York, June 2011.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), 'Progress for Children: Achieving the MDGs with equity', UNICEF, New York, annual report card series no. Number 9, September 2010.

UNODC (United Office on Drugs and Crime) and World Bank, 'Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, costs, and policy options in the Caribbean', Report no. 37820, UNODC and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank, March 2007.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), 'UNICEF's Mission Statement', 2003, https://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_mission.html, accessed 9 March 2017.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Mapping of Child Well-being in St. Lucia.

United Nations, 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', 2015, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>, accessed on 23 March, 2017.

WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, Progress on Sanitation and Drinking-Water: 2010 update, World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund, Geneva and New York, 2010.

Wint, E. and Janssens, W. (2008) Study of the Roving Caregivers Programme Research Findings.

World Bank, World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking poverty, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001.

World Bank, 'Regional Partnership Strategy for the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) for the period FY15-19', Report #85156-LAC, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2014.

Videos

St. Lucia Early Childhood Development Policy launch in 2013 video where the Government of St. Lucia pledges to implement universal early childhood services by 2015.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ8DIBH01RU>, accessed 25 March 2017.





Published by the

UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area

First Floor
UN House
Marine Gardens, Hastings
Christ Church
Barbados

Tel: (246) 467 6000

Fax: (246) 436 2812

Email: bridgetown@unicef.org

Website: www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean

www.facebook.com/UNICEFeasterncaribbean

www.youtube.com/UNICEFeastcaribbean