



# Generation Unlimited: the Well-being of Young People in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

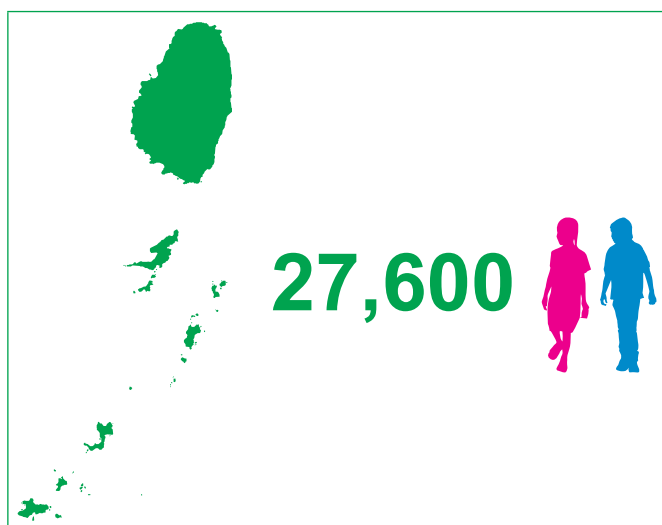
## FACT SHEET

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The age from 10-24 is an important transitional period in the life cycle of young people: from dependence to independence; from childhood to adulthood; from primary to secondary school and onto tertiary education and/or the labour market; and from pre-pubescence to sexual maturity. Few young people are likely to pass through this period without some reversals or feelings of uncertainty, such as: not doing well at school; examination failures; parental discord; problems with friends and partners; and/or difficulties in finding their first job. In most cases, these experiences will be transitory and have little influence on their future lives. But for others, these experiences can be more severe and have long-lasting impacts on one's well-being, on that of their families and, if widespread, on national, social and economic development. In 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 global pandemic and its economic and social impacts have disrupted nearly all aspects of life for all groups in society, but young people, and especially for vulnerable youth, the COVID-19 crisis poses considerable risks to their education, employment, mental health and disposable income. While young people will shoulder much of the long-term economic and social consequences of the crisis, their well-being may be superseded by short-term economic and equity considerations.

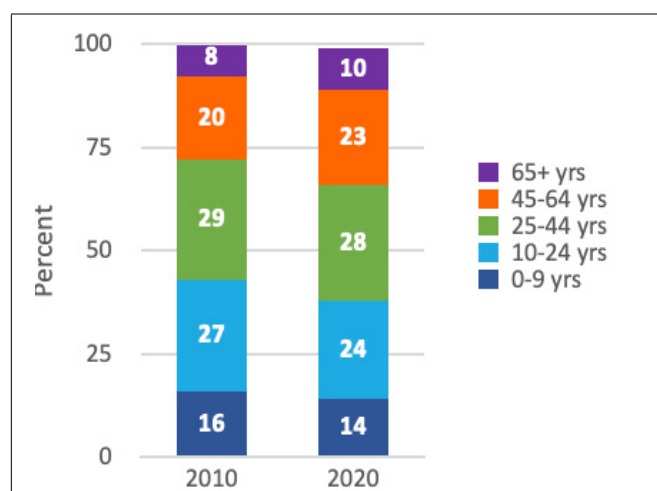
## Young People in St. Vincent and the Grenadines



In 2020, according to UN population projections, there were around 26,700 young people (10-24 years) in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; about 2,600 or 9% fewer than in 2010. Young people accounted for

about 24% of the population. This proportion is likely to decrease in the future as the population continues to age and fertility remains constant or declines.

### Population distribution by age groups



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

## EVERY YOUNG PERSON HAS A FAIR CHANCE IN LIFE

Ending poverty – or its dramatic reduction – is an overarching objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adolescence and young adulthood are times when growing up in poverty can hamper educational performance, increase the risk of unemployment and lead to risky behaviours, such as substance abuse, involvement in gangs and other criminal activities. These can have a detrimental impact on the physical, emotional and social development of young people, threatening their life chances and risking the creation of inter-generational poverty.

### Poverty and Young People

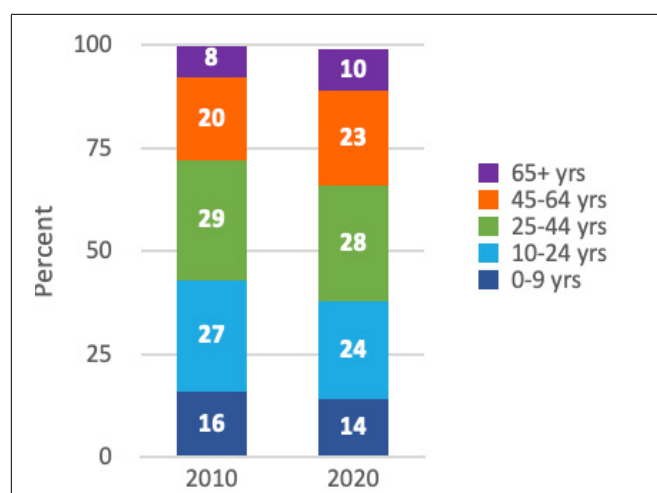
Poverty is at the heart of a considerable amount of vulnerability, social discrimination and exclusion: Households with inadequate income are more vulnerable to changing economic, social and environmental circumstances and to reduced income-earning potential. People in poverty also tend to live in inadequate and unsanitary housing in less desirable neighbourhoods, which are especially vulnerable to weather-related damage. They are also more prone to live in communities with high rates of crime and violence, which can be unsafe environments for adolescents and young people.

Poverty is a problem in the ECA even though countries and territories have reached a level of development that should allow a significant proportion of people living in poverty to escape poverty.

In 2016, 30% of people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were living in poverty and 3% were indigent (indigence entails living in a level of poverty in which real hardship and deprivation are suffered and comforts of life are wholly lacking). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' poverty rate is higher than the average of 23% for the Eastern Caribbean.

More specifically, more than 1 in 3 or 38% of children ages 0-17 and 37% of adolescents ages 10-19 were living in poverty, which is higher than the poverty rate for adults age 18+ years (30%). The poverty rate for young people ages 10-24 is not available because it has yet to be calculated. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines child and adolescent poverty rates are slightly higher than the averages for the Eastern Caribbean (33% and 34% respectively).

### Poverty and indigence rates by age group



**Source:** UNICEF (2020). *Generation Unlimited: The Well-being of Young People in Barbados*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados

Adolescents (ages 10-19) living in female-headed households were more likely to live in poverty (41%) than adolescents living in male-headed households (31%). Whereas, adolescents living in male-headed households (3%) were equally likely to live in indigence as adolescents living in female headed- households (3%).

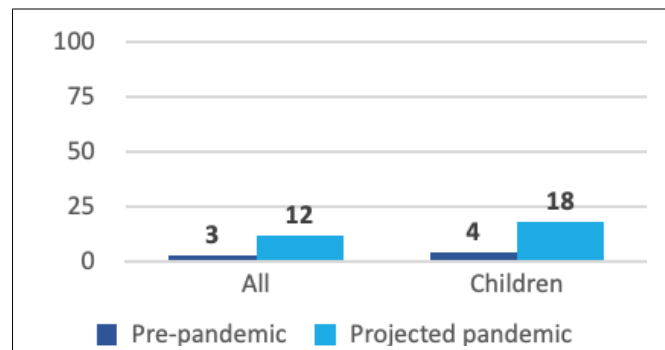
### Adolescent poverty and indigence rate by sex of HoH

**Sources:** OECS Commission/UNICEF (2017). *Child Poverty in the Eastern Caribbean Area, Final Report*. OECS Commission/ UNICEF: Castries, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been projected that severe poverty rates will increase in the ECA, impacting the societies at-large, but children in particular. For children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the severe poverty is projected to increase fourfold from 3% pre-pandemic to 12% as a result of

the pandemic for all in the population. The projected increase in severe poverty is even more dramatic for children from 4% pre-pandemic to 18% as a result of the pandemic.

#### Projected changes in severe poverty due to COVID-19

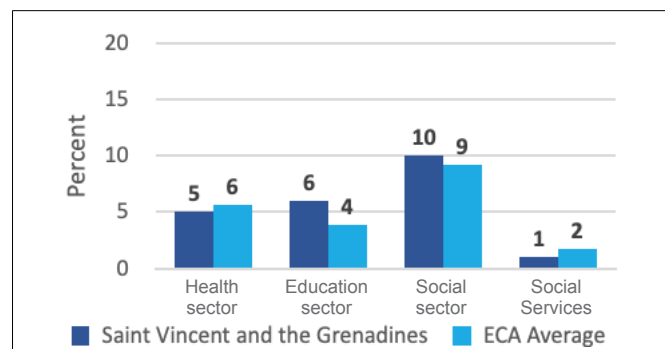


**Source:** USAID/UNICEF (2020). *The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and young people in the ECA*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados, p. 13.

#### Public Finance for Children and Young People

Public financing varies across sectors – health, education, social protection and social services – that are particularly important to children and young people. Mobilising national resources for children and young people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is critical to ensuring a sustainable and equitable impact on their lives.

#### Public expenditures (% of GDP) allocated to sector (%)



**Source:** Nabinger, S. (2017). *Review of Social Sector Expenditures in the Eastern Caribbean Area*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados

## EVERY YOUNG PERSON LEARNS

Access to quality education is crucial if young people are to acquire the knowledge and skills to function in and contribute to society. Experiences at school have far-reaching effects on their development and well-being, encompassing physical and mental health, safety, civic engagement and social development. Education in various forms is a vital prerequisite for combating poverty, empowering young people, protecting them from hazardous and exploitative practices, promoting human rights and democracy and protecting the environment.



#### Primary and Secondary School Enrolment

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines there are 11 years of compulsory starting at the age of 5 years. Primary education is free, but as students move on to secondary or tertiary education, they must pay fees.

In 2018, the primary school enrolment rate was 99%. In 2018, the proportion of over-age students in primary schools was only 2%; nearly this is less than the average of 4% for the Eastern Caribbean. Boys (3%) and girls (2%) were nearly equally likely to be over-age students in primary schools.

In 2016, the secondary school enrolment rate was 90%; secondary school enrolment rate was slightly higher for girls (92%) than boys (87%). In 2018-2019, only 2% of lower secondary school age adolescents were out-of-school; lower than the average of 7% for the Eastern

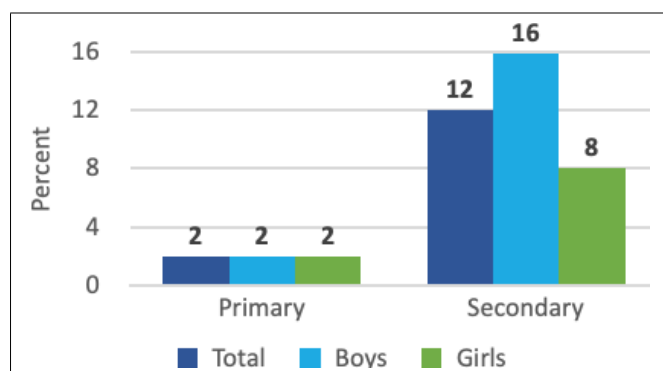
Caribbean. In comparison, 16% of boys and 14% of girls were out-of-school at the upper secondary level; still, however, this is lower than the average of 21% for boys and 20% for girls in the Eastern Caribbean.

## Grade Repetition

Grade repetition rates<sup>1</sup> represent the proportion of pupils who remain in the same grade in the following school year. Repeating a grade reflects the internal efficiency of educational systems. Repetition is one of the key indicators for analysing and projecting pupil flows from grade-to-grade within educational systems. Ideally, repetition rates should approach zero percent. High repetition rates reveal problems in the internal efficiency of the educational system and possible reflect a poor level of instruction. When compared across grades, the patterns can indicate specific grades for which there is higher repetition, hence requiring more in-depth study of causes and possible remedies.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the repetition rate was 2% for primary education and less than 12% for secondary education. At the secondary education level boys (16%) were twice as likely as girls (8%) to repeat grades. It is notable that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has the highest grade repetition rate among OECS countries.

**Repetition rate for primary and secondary education**



**Source:** OECS (2020). *Education Statistical Digest for the Academic Year 2018-2019*. OECS: Castries, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

## School Dropout

<sup>1</sup> Repetition rate is the number of repeaters in a given grade in a given school year, expressed as a percentage of enrolment in that grade the previous year.

School dropout rates reflect the proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given school year who are no longer enrolled in the following school year. Premature exiting measures the phenomenon of pupils from a cohort leaving school without completion, and its effect on the internal efficiency of educational systems. School dropout is a key indicator for analysing and projecting pupil flows from grade-to-grade within the educational cycle. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the dropout rate was fewer than 1% for primary education and 3% for secondary education.

## Primary and Secondary Completion Rates

In 2018-2019, the primary education completion rate was 106%. Girls (111%) had a higher primary education completion rate than boys (100%). The lower secondary education completion rate was 92%. Girls (96%) had a higher secondary education completion rate than boys (88%).

## Skills and Learning Outcomes

At primary and secondary levels of education, children and adolescents develop foundational and transferable skills, including digital skills needed to enable them to become lifelong learners, and to access future educational and work opportunities.

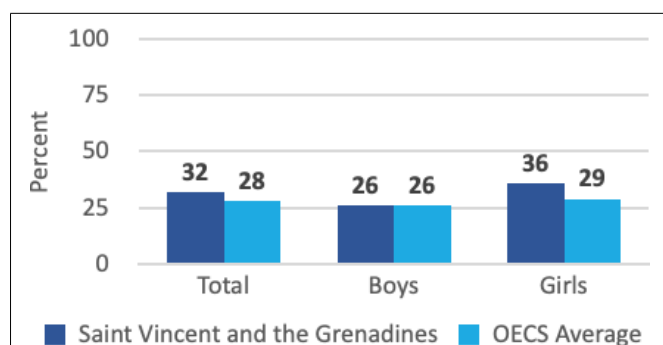
In 2018-2019, on average, among OECS Member States, only 1 in 4 or 28% of students passed CSEC subjects, including English A and Mathematics. The proportion of students who passed five or more CSEC subjects, including English A and Mathematics, was higher than average in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (32%). Girls (36%) and boys (26%) were equally likely to pass five or more CSEC subjects, including English A and Mathematics.

### Students passing 5 or more CSEC subjects including English A and Maths





## Students passing 5 or more CSEC subjects by gender



**Source:** OECS (2020). *Education Statistical Digest for the Academic Year 2018-2019*. OECS: Castries, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

It is also notable that 98% of students in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines attended Grades I, II, III and CSEC Information Technology (IT). This is a bit lower than the OESC average of 95%.

## Trained Teachers

A trained teacher is one who has received at least the minimum organised pedagogical teacher training pre-service and in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in Suriname. Training of teachers can have a great impact on student learning outcome; yet this only happens when the teachers apply new knowledge and skills in their classroom.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in 2018-2019, the proportion of trained teachers was 85% at the primary education level and 63% at the secondary education level; this compares to the average for Caribbean Small States (83% and 73% respectively), OECS Member States (72% and 60% respectively), and the Eastern Caribbean Area (70% and 61% respectively).

## Tertiary Education

Access to tertiary education for youth is crucial to learning outcomes and skills development, human development of a population and poverty reduction in a country. Summary data on transition rates and net enrolment rates, as well as numbers of youth in tertiary education are limited. In 2019, the gross enrolment rate for tertiary education was only 24% in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; significantly lower than the ECA

average (44%) and the average for Caribbean Small States (23%).

## EVERY YOUNG PERSON PARTICIPATES

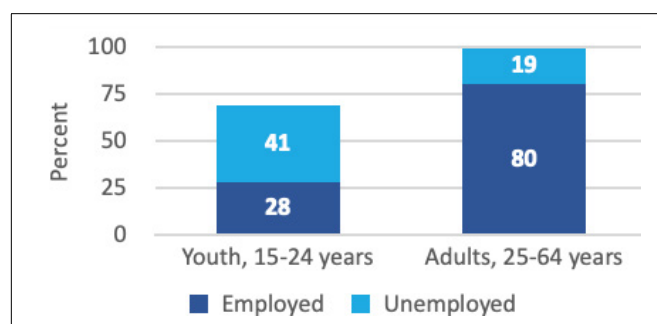
For young people, the path to a successful future goes through quality education that equips them – and empowers them – with the skills they need to thrive into today’s work force. This transition is not always so straight forward, especially when young people are unable to find suitable jobs. This can have a negative impact on their self-esteem, mental health and well-being, contribute to engagement in anti-social or risk behaviours, and can be a financial strain on the household and affect their relationship with family members.

## Youth Employment and Unemployment

In the OECS subregion, the total youth population (ages 15-24) is estimated at 103,000, of which 34% were employed in the labour force and 26% were unemployed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; in comparison, 85% of adults ages 25-64 were employed and 9% were unemployed prior to the pandemic.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, only 28% of youth were employed in the labour force, compared to 80% of adults; whereas 41% of youth and only 19% of adults were unemployed. Youth were twice as likely as adults to be unemployed.

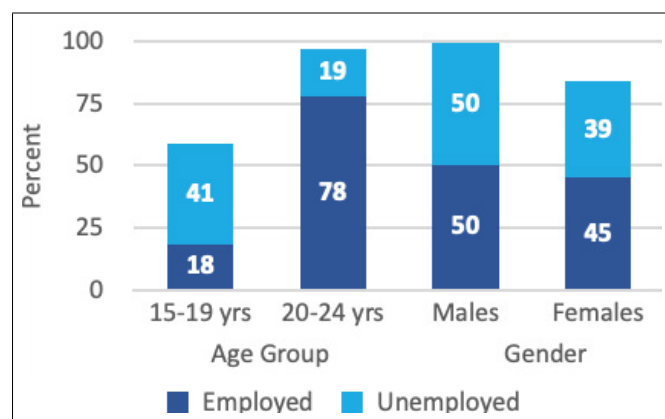
### Labour force participation by age groups



**Source:** OECS/UNICEF/ILO (2020). *Youth Unemployment in Barbados and the OECS Area: A Statistical Comparison*. OECS Commission: Castries, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Youth ages 20-24 (78%) were four times more likely to be employed than youth aged 15-19 (18%); whereas, youth ages 15-19 (41%) were twice as likely to be unemployed than youth aged 20-24 years (19%). In terms of gender, male youth (50%) were slightly more likely to participate in the labour force than female youth (45%); male youth (50%) were also more likely to be unemployed than female youth (39%).

**Youth labour for participation by age and gender**



**Source:** OECS/UNICEF/ILO (2020). *Youth Unemployment in Barbados and the OECS Area: A Statistical Comparison*. OECS Commission: Castries, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

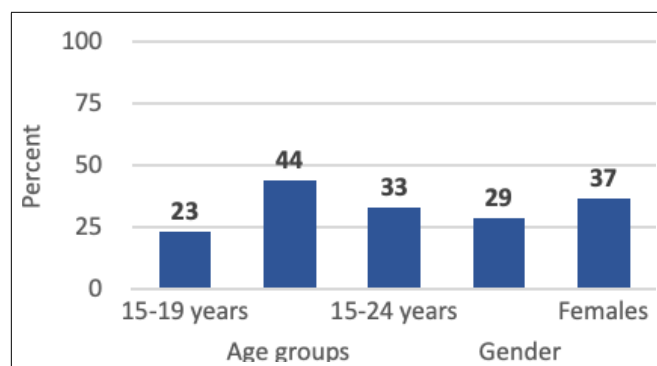
## Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

The NEET indicator is the percentage of youth population that are neither working, nor in education or training. It includes those youth who are unemployed and those who are inactive for other reasons. This indicator is the result of a recognition that unemployment is strictly defined as those who are not in employment and are actively seeking work and are available for work. As a consequence, this definition excludes a potentially significant proportion of the youth population who are not working, but are not actively seeking employment for a variety of reasons.

Youth NEETs are likely at-risk from the adverse impacts of unemployment, including marginalisation, exclusion and engagement in anti-social behaviours. The need to incorporate this group of youth into the analysis of youth issues led to the NEET indicator becoming the sole youth-specific target for post-2015 SDGs.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 39% of youth ages 10-24 are in education, 28% are employed and 33% are NEETs. Youth NEETs are more likely to be aged 20-24 (44%) than 15-19 years (23%); they are also more likely to be female (37%) than male (29%).

**Youth NEET rate by age groups and gender**



**Source:** OECS/UNICEF/ILO (2020). *Youth Unemployment in Barbados and the OECS Area: A Statistical Comparison*. OECS Commission: Castries, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

It has been projected that the youth unemployment rate can be expected to double due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the majority of unemployed youth live with their families, this can only further exacerbate the financial situations of families/households and increase the risks of volatile family situations. Further analysis is needed to understand the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on youth unemployment and labour force participation.

## EVERY YOUNG PERSON THRIVES

The rights of adolescents and youth to survive, grow and develop are enshrined in international conventions, including the CRC. In keeping states are obliged to recognise the special health and development needs and rights of young people, including adolescents and youth. Young people will thrive when they continue to eat well, are stimulated and cared for at home and in their communities, and enjoy access to quality education that gives them opportunities to learn and grow into adulthood.

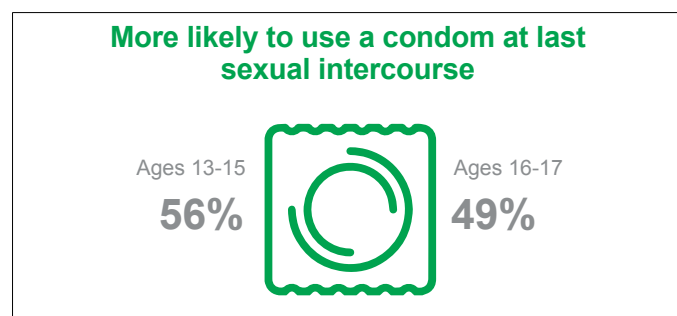
## Sexual Behaviours

Data on the sexual behaviours of adolescents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are limited to adolescent ages 13-17 and three indicators – ever had sexual intercourse, had sexual intercourse before the age of 14, and condom use during the last act of sexual intercourse.

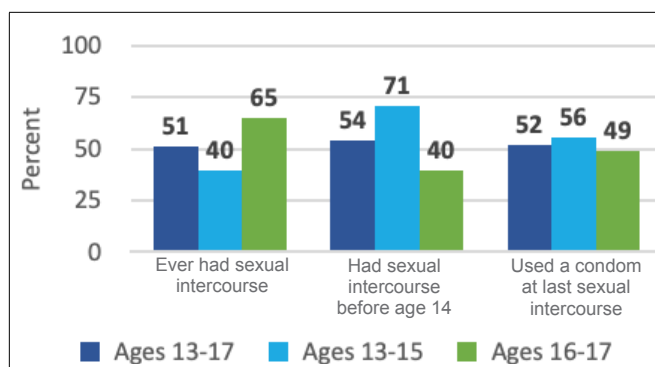
Among adolescents ages 13-17, 1 in 2 or 51% ever had sexual intercourse. Adolescents ages 16-17 (65%) were more likely to have ever had sexual intercourse, compared to adolescents ages 13-15 (40%). Among adolescents ages 13-17, boys (64%) were more likely than girls (39%) to have ever had sexual intercourse. Among adolescents ages 13-15, boys (56%) were twice as likely as girls (27%) to have ever had sexual intercourse. This same pattern emerges among adolescents ages 16-17 (74% boys, 56% girls).

Among adolescents ages 13-17 who ever had sexual intercourse, 1 in 2 or 54% did so before 14 years of age; whereas 71% of adolescents ages 13-15 were nearly twice as likely to have sexual intercourse before 14 years of age, compared to adolescents ages 16-17 (40%). Among adolescents ages 13-17, boys (59%) were four times more likely than girls (15%) to have had sex for the first time before 14 years of age. Among adolescents ages 13-15, boys (70%) were more than twice as likely as girls (29%) to have sexual intercourse before 14 years. This same pattern emerges among adolescents ages 16-17 (83% boys, 50% girls).

Among sexually active adolescent, only 52% used a condom at last sexual intercourse. Adolescents ages 13-15 (56%) were slightly more likely than adolescents ages 16-17 (49%) to use a condom at last sexual intercourse.

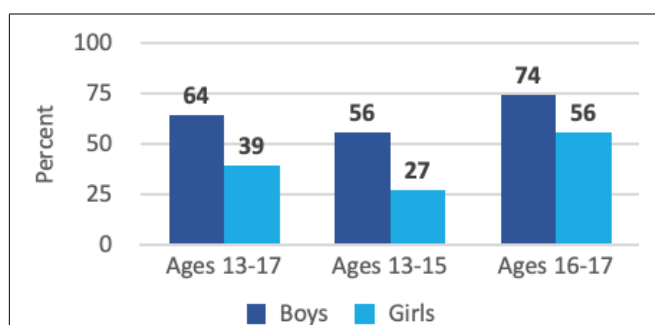


## Sexual behaviours among adolescents by age



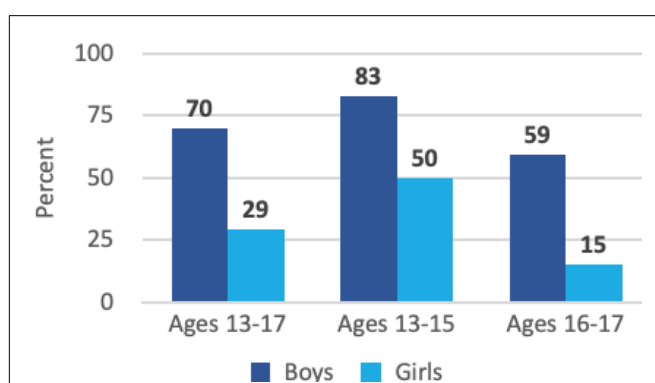
Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 2018

## Adolescents sexual intercourse by age and gender



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

## Adolescents sexual intercourse by age and gender



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

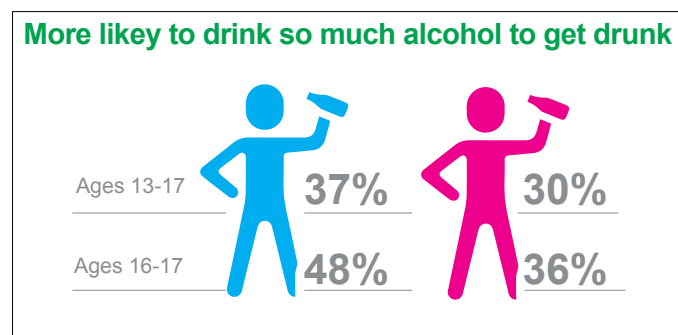
## Alcohol and Tobacco Use

Alcohol and tobacco use typically have their onset in adolescence and young adulthood, and are major risk factors for adverse health and social outcomes, as well as for non-communicable diseases later in life. During adolescence and young adulthood, young people are less able to anticipate the negative effects

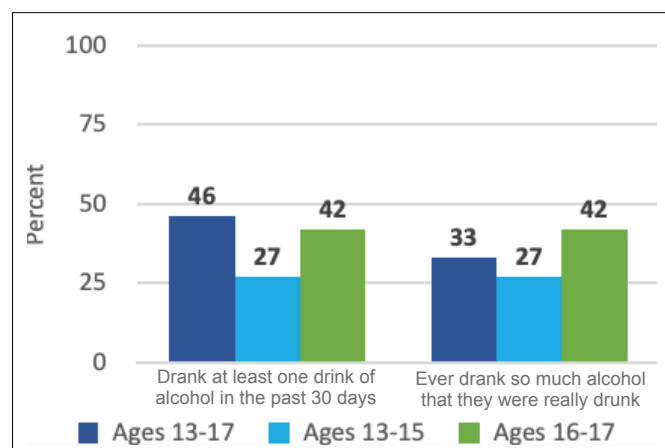
of alcohol and tobacco use on their health and well-being, including risks of abusing such substance and developing addictions.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 46% of adolescents ages 13-17 drank at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days, and 33% ever drank so much alcohol that they were really drunk. Adolescents ages 16-17 more likely to drink at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days (42%) and to ever drink so much alcohol that they were really drunk (42%), compared to adolescents ages 13-15 (27% and 27% respectively).

There were no gender differences in alcohol use, but boys were more likely than girls to ever drink so much alcohol that they were really drunk. Boys ages 13-17 (37%) were more likely than girls (30%) to ever drink so much that they were really drunk. This gender difference is most notable among adolescents ages 16-17 (48% boys, 36% girls).

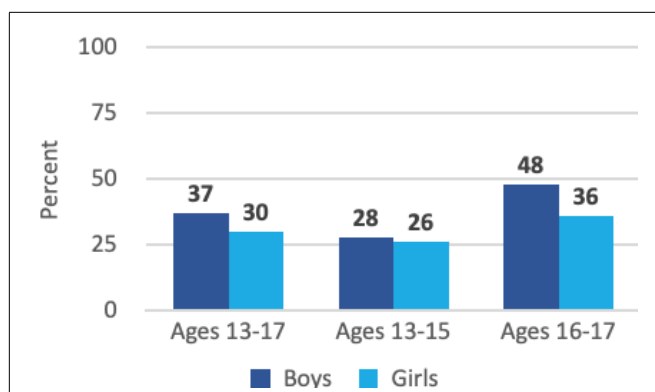


#### Adolescent alcohol consumption by age



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

#### Alcohol drunkenness by age and gender

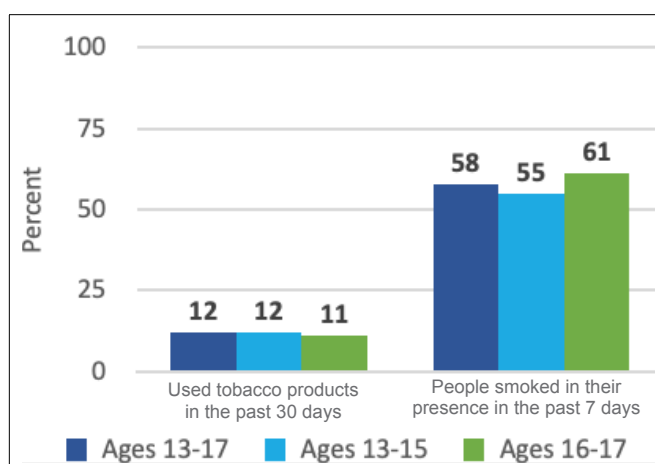


Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease and death, and nearly all tobacco use begins during adolescents and young adulthood. Adolescents and youth who use tobacco products are at higher risk for developing nicotine dependence and might be more likely to continue using tobacco into adulthood.

Although more than 1 in 2 or 58% of adolescents ages 13-17 had people smoke in their presence during the past 7 days, only 11% used any tobacco products in the past 30 days. Among adolescents ages 13-17, boys (14%) were slightly more likely than girls (10%) to use tobacco produce in the past 30 days. This same pattern emerged among boys and girls ages 13-15 and 16-17 years.

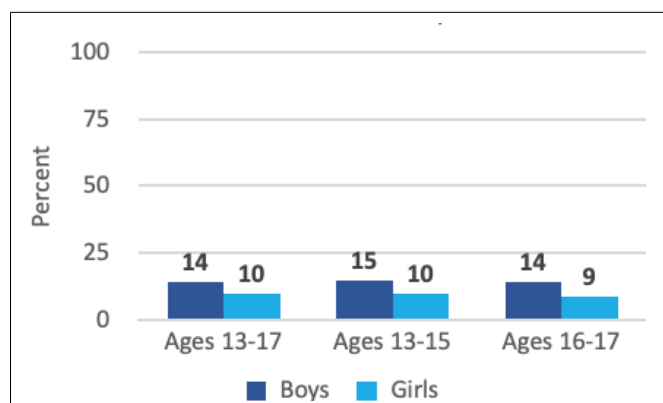
#### Adolescent use of tobacco products by age



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018



### Tobacco use by age and gender

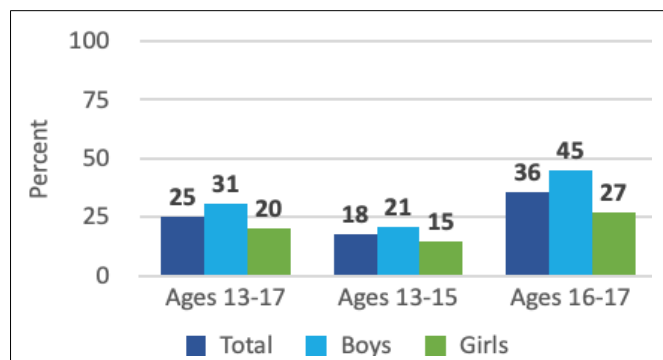


Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

### Drug Use

As it relates to drug use, as many as 29% of adolescents ages 13-17 in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ever used marijuana. Adolescents ages 16-17 (36%) were twice as likely to ever use marijuana as adolescents ages 13-15 (18%). Boys were more likely than girls to ever use marijuana, regardless of age group.

### Marijuana use by age and gender



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

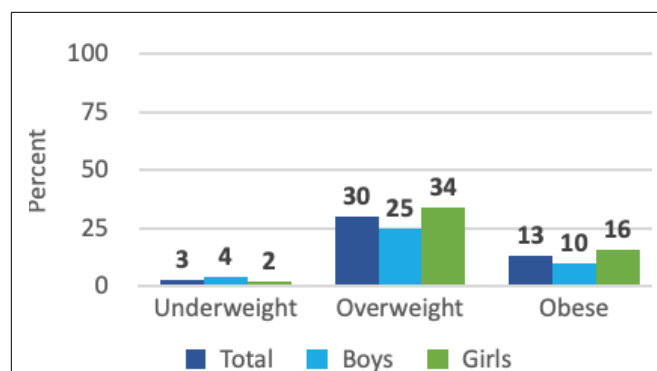
### Nutrition

Adolescence is the period of development that begins at puberty and ends in early adulthood, and is characterised by a rapid pace of growth that is second only to that of infancy. Rapid physical growth during adolescence creates a high demand for energy and certain nutrients. Nutrition is a critical factor for appropriate adolescent development and an important element for prevention of disease development, especially for chronic disease. Over the past decade,

nutrition has been identified as a major global priority, and the increase in worldwide overweight and obesity has been highlighted.

In Saint Kitts and Nevis, only 3% of adolescents ages 13-17 were underweight ( $\leq 2$  SD from median for BMI), whereas nearly 1 in 3 or 30% were overweight ( $>+1$ SD from median for BMI by age and sex) and 13% were obese ( $>+2$ SD from median for BMI by age and sex). It is notable that boys (4%) were twice as likely as girls (2%) to be underweight; whereas girls were more likely to be overweight (34%) and obese (16%), compared to boys (25% and 10% respectively).

### Underweight and overweight adolescents ages 13-17



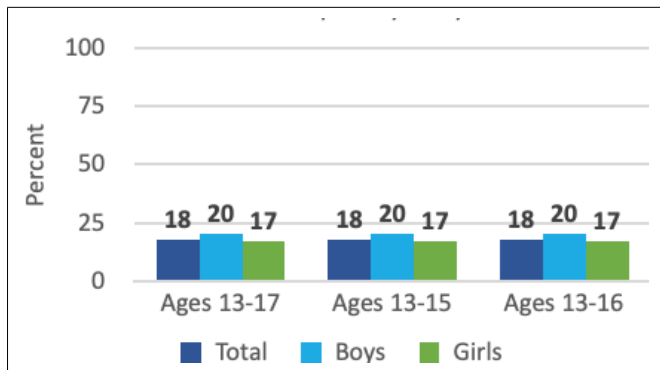
Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2009

### Physical Activity

Regular physical activity in adolescence promotes health and fitness; thus, it is important to provide young people with opportunities and encouragement to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age and are enjoyable. Adolescents should engage in at least one hour or more of moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity each day, and muscle and bone-strengthening physical activity at least three days a week.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, only 18% of adolescents ages 13-17 were physically active at least one hour per day. Boys (20%) were only slightly more likely than girls (17%) to be physically active at least one hour per day. This is a similar pattern among adolescents ages 13-15 and 16-17 years.

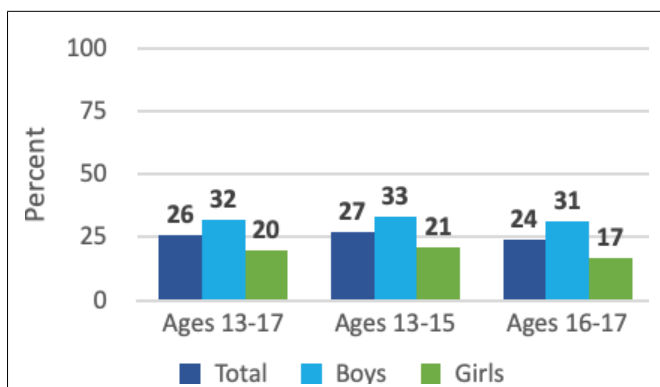
### Physically active adolescents by age and gender



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

Only 26% of adolescents ages 13-17 attended physical education classes three or more days a week during the school year. Boys (32%) were more likely than girls (20%) to attend physical education classes three or more days a week during the school year. This is a similar pattern among adolescents ages 13-15 and 16-17 years.

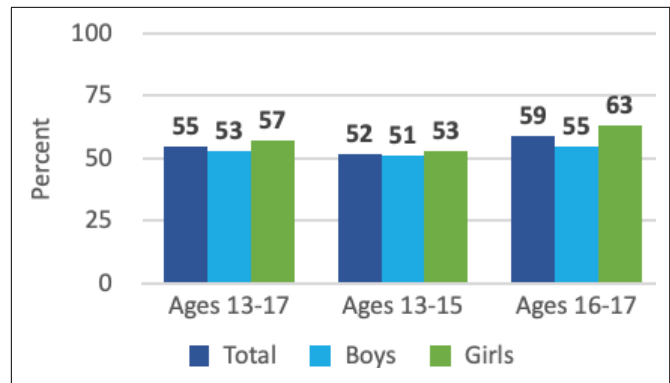
### Adolescents who attend physical education



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

It is notable that more than 1 in 2 or 55% of adolescents ages 13-17 were physically inactive, i.e., spend three or more hours per day sitting and watching television, playing computer games or talking with friends, when not in school or doing homework during a typical or usual day. Girls (57%) were slightly more likely than boys (53%) to spend three or more hours per day sitting. These same gender differences exist among adolescents ages 13-15 and 16-17 years.

### Adolescents who spent 3+ hrs per day sitting



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

### Mental Health

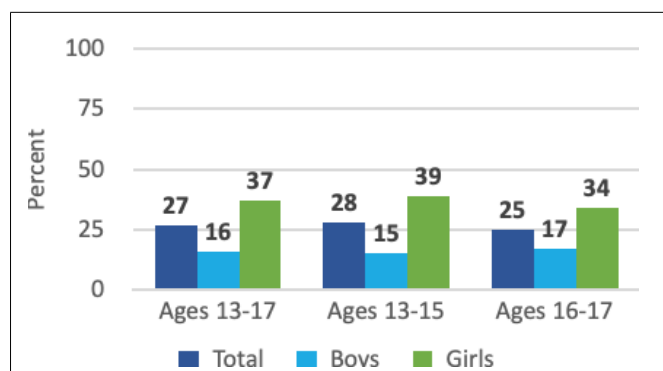
Most adolescents have good mental health, however, physical, emotional and social changes that occur during adolescence, coupled with exposure to poverty, physical and/or sexual violence, harsh parenting, and peer bullying can make adolescents vulnerable to mental health problems. Other risk factors that contribute to stress during adolescence include the quality of one's home life, relationships with peers, pressure to conform to peers, exploration of sexual and/or gender identity, and negative impacts of social media. Some adolescents are at greater risk of experiencing mental health problems because they experience stigmatisation, discrimination and exclusion, and lack access to quality support and mental health services.

### Suicide

Among adolescents ages 13-17, 1 in 4 or 27% seriously considered attempting suicide and 19% attempted suicide one or more times in the past 12 months. Girls (34%) were twice as likely as boys (17%) to consider attempting suicide; this is a similar gender pattern among adolescents ages 13-15 and 16-17. Girls (21%) were also more likely than boys (15%) to attempt suicide one or more times in the past 12 months; this is a similar gender pattern among adolescents ages 13-15 and 16-17.

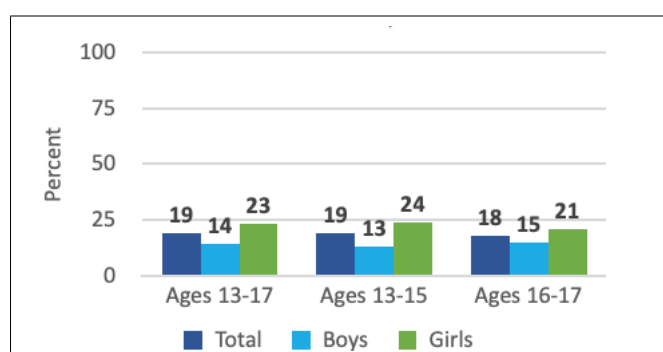
It is notable that more than 1 in 3 or 34% of girls ages 13-17 considered attempting suicide, and nearly 1 in 5 of 19% of girls ages 13-17 attempted suicide one or more times in the past 12 months.

### Suicidal tendencies by age and gender



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

### Suicide attempts by age and gender



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

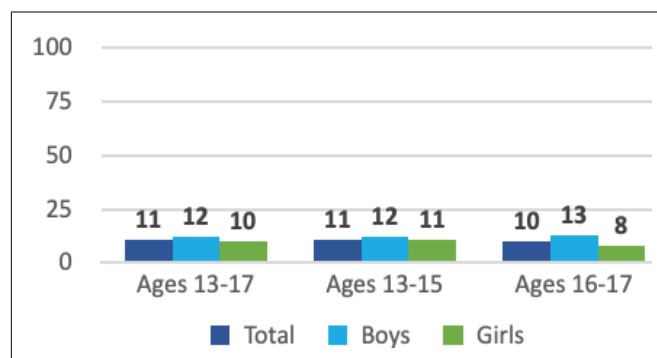
### Well-Being Protective Factors

Parental and peer relationships are very important to adolescent mental health. Teenagers with friendship and close ties to their parents/guardians tend to be more adaptive to stress, report being happier due to an increased feeling of uniqueness, and are likely to do better academically. In addition, they tend to have higher self-esteem and self-confidence and may be more assertive.



In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, only 10% of adolescents ages 13-17 reported they had no close friends; there were no differences based upon age or gender.

### Adolescents without close friends by age and gender

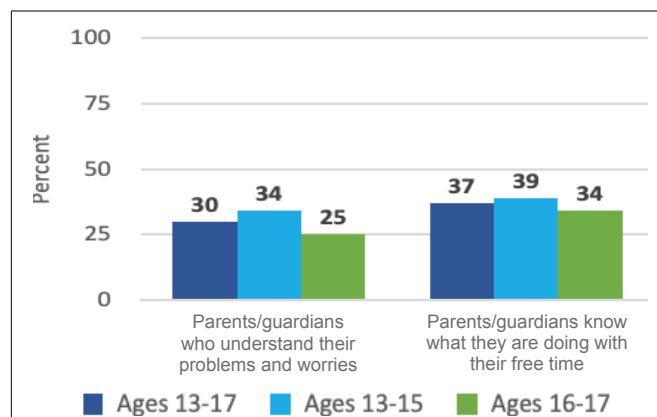


Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

Only 30% of adolescents ages 13-17 had parents/guardians who understood their problems and worries, and 37% had parents/guardians who knew what they are doing with their free time. Adolescents ages 13-15 were slightly more likely to report their parents/guardians understand their problems and worries (34%) and know what they are doing with their free time (39%), compared to adolescents ages 16-17 (25% and 34% respectively).

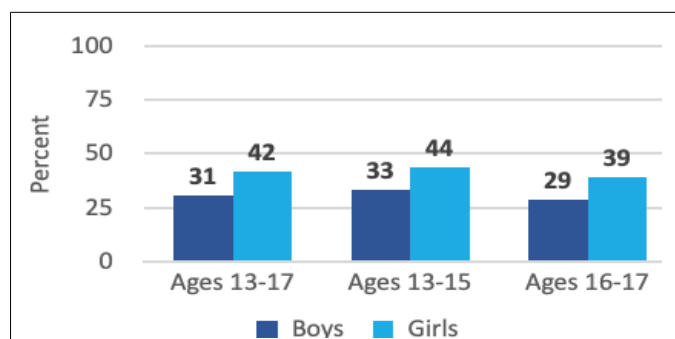
It is notable that adolescent girls, regardless of age, were more likely than boys to report their parents/guardians know what they are doing with their free time.

### Adolescents with involved parents by age



Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

## Adolescents with involved parents by sex and gender

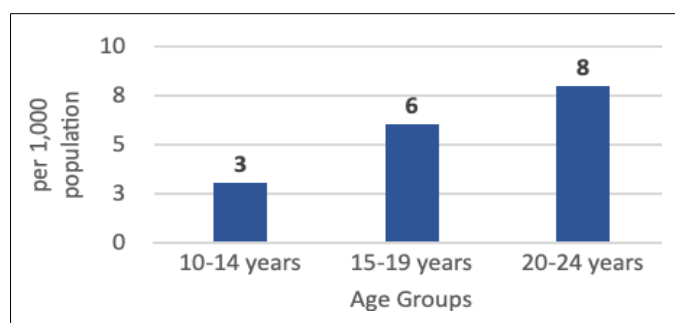


Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

## Mortality of Young People

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the probability of young people dying varies by age. The probability of mortality is highest among youth ages 20-24 (8 per 1,000 youth) and 15-19 years (6 per 1,000 youth), and lowest among adolescent ages 10-14 (3 per 1,000 adolescents). In the Eastern Caribbean, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines had the second highest probability of dying rate for youth ages 20-24.

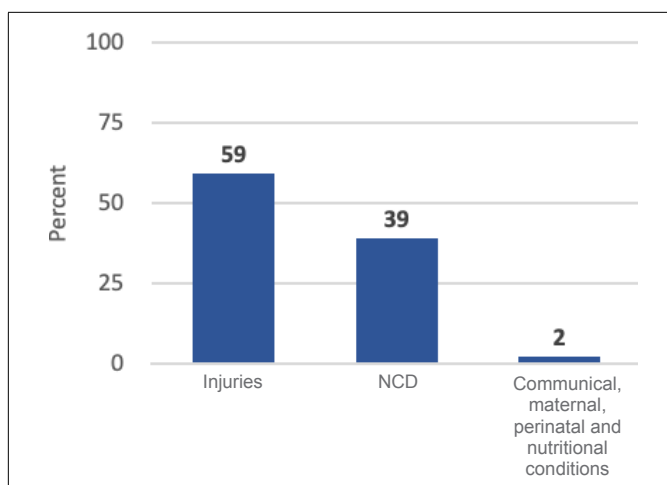
### Probability of dying among young people by age group



Source: Estimates developed by the UN Inter-agency Group for child Mortality Estimation (UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, UN DESA Population Division).

The leading causes of death among adolescents ages 10-19 is injuries (59%), compared to noncommunicable diseases (NCDs, 39%) and communicable, maternal, perinatal and nutritional conditions (2%). The leading causes of mortality varied by gender.

## Leading causes of mortality for adolescents ages 10-19



Source: UNICEF Adolescent Health Dashboards, 2020

Adolescents ages 10-19 leading causes of mortality	
Boys	Girls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road injury</li> <li>Drowning</li> <li>Cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, endocarditis</li> <li>Leukaemia</li> <li>Congenital anomalies</li> <li>Intimate partner violence</li> <li>Sickle cell disorders and traits</li> <li>Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skin diseases</li> <li>Intimate partner violence</li> <li>Self-harm</li> <li>Road injury</li> <li>Kidney diseases</li> <li>Epilepsy</li> <li>Maternal conditions</li> <li>Congenital anomalies</li> </ul>

Source: UNICEF Adolescent Health Dashboards, 2020

## Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs)

The disability-adjusted life year (DALY) is a summary measure of overall disease burden, expressed as the number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death. DALYs were developed in the 1990s by the World Bank and World Health Organisation (WHO) as a measure of the global impact of disease on individual illness status, i.e., a way of quantifying the global burden of disease and a way of comparing the overall health and life expectancy across countries. DALY combines information about morbidity and mortality and is expressed in terms of numbers of healthy years lost.

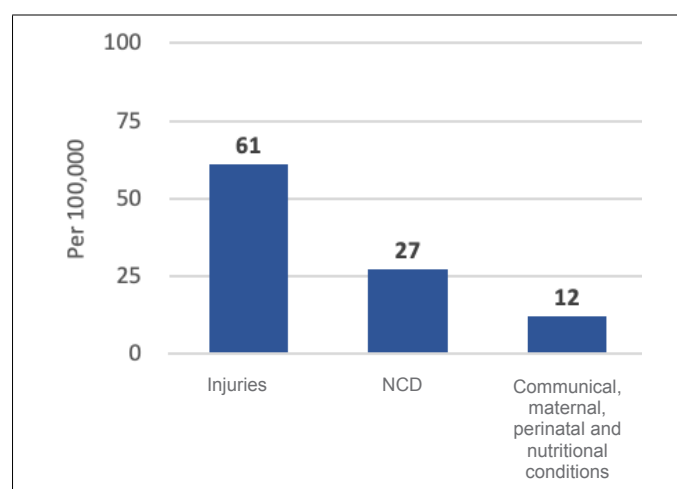
## DALY

Disability Adjusted Life Years measure the overall burden of disease, expressed as the cumulative number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death.



In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, NCD was the main cause of DALY at 61 per 100,000, followed by injuries (27 per 100,000) and communicable, maternal, perinatal and nutritional conditions (12 per 100,000). The leading causes of DALYs varied by gender.

### DALY by cause among adolescents ages 10-19



Source: UNICEF Adolescent Health Dashboards, 2020

Leading causes of DALYs, adolescents ages 10-19	
Boys	Girls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road injury</li> <li>Drowning</li> <li>Cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, endocarditis</li> <li>Congenital anomalies</li> <li>Leukaemia</li> <li>Intimate partner violence</li> <li>Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skin diseases</li> <li>Intimate partner violence</li> <li>Self-harm</li> <li>Depressive disorders</li> <li>Anxiety disorders</li> <li>Road injury</li> <li>Migraine</li> </ul>

Source: UNICEF Adolescent Health Dashboards, 2020

## National Policies/Plans on Child/Adolescent Health

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has adopted some national policies and plans on child and adolescent health, such as those related to NCDs and reducing physical inactivity.

National policies and plans on child/adolescent health	
Operational, multi-sectoral national NCD policy, strategy or action plan that integrates several NCDs and their risk factors	Yes
National adolescent health programme	No
Operational policy/strategy/action plan to reduce physical inactivity	Yes
National policy to prohibit the selling of unhealthy foods and sweetened beverages in or close to schools	No
National policy/laws designating an appropriate minimum age for purchase or consumption of alcoholic beverages	No
National policy/law to prohibit sale of tobacco products to minors	No
Plan or strategy for child and/or adolescent mental health	No
Colour Code	Yes
	No
	Unknown

Source: UNICEF Adolescent Health Dashboards, 2020

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also has taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages and alcohol.

Taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages and alcohol	
Sugar-sweetened beverages	Yes
Beer	Yes
Spirits	Yes
Wine	Yes
Colour Code	Yes
	No

Source: UNICEF Adolescent Health Dashboards, 2020



## EVERY YOUNG PERSON IS PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

Violence is a pervasive violation of children's rights. Many children and young people are exposed to violence because they grow up in violent households and communities. Violence occurs in many settings, including the home, school, community and over the Internet. As young people pass through adolescence and become young adults, they begin to spend more time outside their homes and interact more intimately with a wider range of people. These interactions are crucial to their development, but can also expose them to new form of violence and exploitation. These threats can have implications for their physical and mental health lasting into adolescence, young adulthood and older age with indirect, but equally potential severe impact on their families, communities and wider society.

Protection of children and young people from all forms of violence and exploitation are fundamentals rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). SDGs include specific targets to: end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children (SDG 16.2); end all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (SDG 5.2); and eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage (SDG 5.3).

Violence against children (VAC), including gender-based violence (GBV), knows no boundaries of culture, socio-economic status, education, income or ethnic origin; however, gender, disability, poverty and national/ethnic origin are some of the risk factors that can place children and young people at increased risk of experiencing violence and exploitation.

### Corporal Punishment

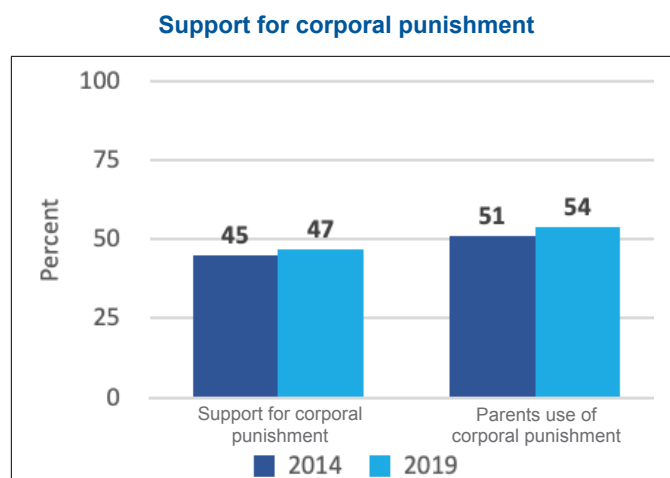
Understanding children's risks of experiencing corporal punishment requires understanding the extent to

which such violence is a social norm tolerated in families and communities. In Saint Vincent, support for corporal punishment has remained largely unchanged from 45% in 2014 to 47% in 2019. A large proportion of adults believe that corporal punishment instils discipline (62%), encourages obedience (54%), curbs misbehaviour (54%) and establishes authority (40%). Some adults also believe that corporal punishment encourages children to perform well in school (22%) and allows adults to vent frustration (5%).

There has also been small increase in the parents use of corporal punishment from 51% in 2014 to 54% in 2019. It is notable that 58% of adults believe it is suitable to use corporal punishment on children ages 6-11, and 56% though it suitable to use corporal punishment on children ages 12-16.



In 2019, only 42% of adults supported banning corporal punishment in schools and 19% supported banning corporal punishment in the home.



**Note:** Data are only for Saint Vincent.

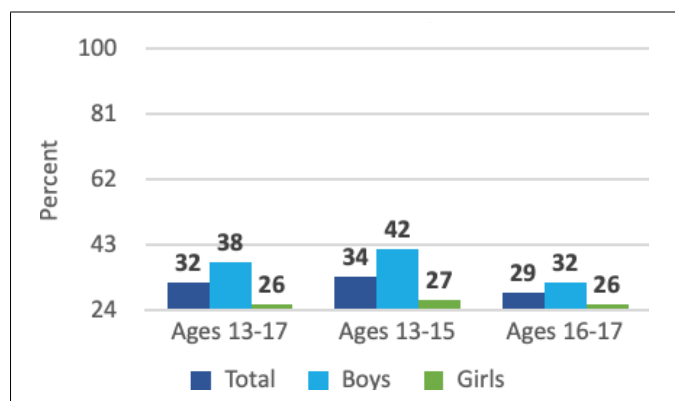
**Source:** Caribbean Development Research Services, (2019). *Social Survey Report*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados.

## Peer Violence

Once children enter school, friendships and interactions with peers take on an important role in the lives of children and adolescents. These relationships have the potential to contribute to a child's sense of well-being and social competence, but are also associated with exposure to new forms of violence and victimisation. Peer violence can take many forms, but available data suggests that bullying by peers and/or schoolmates is the most common form of peer violence.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, nearly 1 in 3 or 32% of adolescents ages 13-17 were in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months. Adolescents ages 13-15 (34%) were more likely to be in a physical fight one or more time in the past 12 months, than adolescents ages 16-17 (29%). Regardless of age, boys were more likely than girls to be in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months.

### Adolescents in physical fights by age and gender



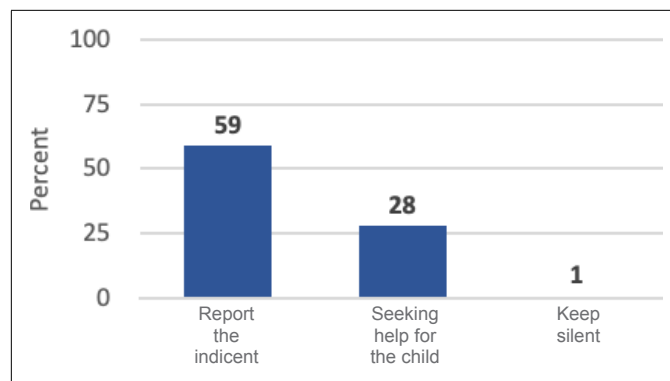
Source: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines GSHS, 2018

## Child Sexual Abuse

Understanding children's risks of experiencing child sexual abuse requires understanding the extent to which such violence is a social norm tolerated in families and communities. In Saint Vincent, 71% of adults viewed child sexual abuse as a major problem in the country, whereas 17% viewed it as a minor problem and 1% thought child sexual abuse was not a problem at all. It is notable that nearly 2 in 3 or 64% of adults engaged in victim-blaming and believed the myth that girls invite sexual abuse by the way they dress.

When asked what they would do if they had knowledge of child sexual abuse, 59% of adults would report the incident of child sexual abuse, 28% would seek help for the child and 1% would remain silent.

### Reaction of adults to child sexual abuse



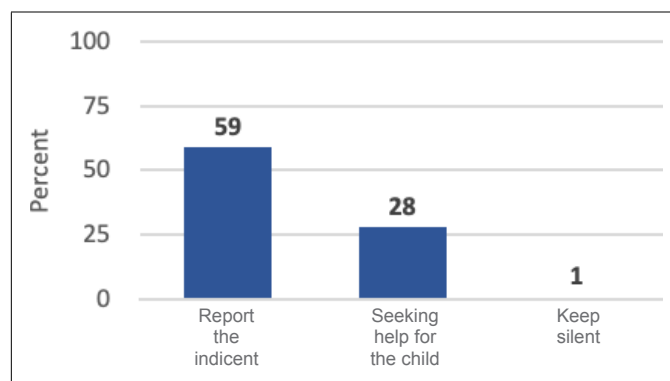
Note: Data are only for Saint Vincent.

Source: Caribbean Development Research Services, (2019). *Social Survey Report*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados

## Domestic Violence

Understanding children's risks of experiencing domestic violence requires understanding the extent to which such violence is a social norm tolerated in families and communities. In Saint Vincent, 628% of adults considered domestic violence a major problem in the country, whereas 26% considered it a minor problem and 1% thought it was not a problem.

### Attitudes toward domestic violence in one's country



Note: Data are only for Saint Vincent.

Source: Caribbean Development Research Services, (2019). *Social Survey Report*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados

## Child Labour

As a signatory to the CRC and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour and the Convention on Minimum Age, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has made efforts to eradicate child labour. Despite such efforts, in 2012, it was found that 8% of children ages 5-14 were involved in child labour. More, specifically 11% of children ages 5-11 worked at least one-hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week, and 1% of adolescents ages 12-14 worked at least 114 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work. Bear in mind, the data are a decade old and outdated.

## Human Trafficking

There is a lack of data and information about trafficking and exploitation of young people in the ECA. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, foreign women in commercial sex may be exploited in sex trafficking, and foreign workers may be exploited in forced labour. Young people and children have been victims of forced labour, primarily in the agriculture sector. Government officials and civil society suspect drug traffickers' exploit workers in forced labour in the production of marijuana. There are also reports indicating child sex trafficking, facilitated by parents/caregivers, is a problem in the country.

## Child Protection and Justice for Children

Governments across the Caribbean, including the OECS region, have stepped up efforts to improve responses to child protection, particularly for children who are vulnerable to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and children in conflict with the law. All ECA countries have ratified the CRC, but in several cases, this was not followed by passing the Optional Protocols needed for an efficient child protection environment.

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has taken steps to translate international normative frameworks into national law by passing and implementing a Domestic Violence Bill and a Child Care and Adoption Bill. A Status of Children Bill has

also been passed, but it has not yet taken effect, and a Child Justice Bill is in progress of being developed.

National child protection legislation		
Domestic Violence Bill		
Child Care and Adoption Bill		
Child Justice Bill		
Status of Children Bill		
Child Maintenance Bill		
Guardianship, Custody & Access Bill		
Colour Code	Passed, taken effect	
	Passed, not taken effect	
	In progress	
	Not passed	

**Source:** UNICEF (2020). *Situation Analysis of Children in the Eastern Caribbean*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has yet to abolish corporal punishment across settings, except a policy or draft law is under consideration to abolish corporal punishment in sentencing.

Status of legal abolition of corporal punishment		
Home		
Alternative Care		
Day Care		
Schools		
Penal Institutions		
Sentencing		
Colour Code	Abolished in laws	
	Stated policy, ministerial statement or draft law under consideration for abolition	
	Not abolished	

**Source:** UNICEF (2020). *Situation Analysis of Children in the Eastern Caribbean*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados

Child protection and juvenile justice policy development has been generally weak and inconsistent among Eastern Caribbean countries, however, some OECS countries have made progress establishing policies for child protection and juvenile justice. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has passed and implemented a national plan of action on child protection and juvenile justice. The Government has also established youth/family courts. The Government has passed, but not yet implement a child protection system that has both preventive and responsive services.

National child protection policies and practices		
National plan of action on child protection		
National plan of action on juvenile justice issues		
Child protection system has both preventive and responsive services		
Youth/Family Court established		
Legal aid for juveniles provided		
Colour Code	Passed, taken effect	
	Passed, not taken effect	
	Not passed	

**Sources:** Sealy-Burke, J. (2018), *OECS Assessment of Child Protection Services*. OECS Commission: Castries, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; UNICEF (2020). *Situation Analysis of Children in the Eastern Caribbean*. UNICEF Office for the ECA: Christ Church, Barbados.

## EVERY YOUNG PERSON LIVES IN A SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

Children need a safe and clean environment to survive, grow and thrive (Article 24, CRC). The availability of safe and clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, and the quality of the physical environment in which children, adolescents and youth live, are important determinants of their health and well-being, and learning, safety and ability to take advantage of opportunities to reach their full potential. Inadequate WASH is primarily responsible for the transmission of diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio. Diarrheal diseases exacerbate malnutrition and remain a leading global cause of child deaths.

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services, and good hygiene practices are considered core socio-economic and health determinants and are key for survival and well-being. Everyone has the human right to safe drinking water. When children and young people do not have access to clean water, it negatively impacts all aspects of their lives, including their health, nutrition and education. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 95% of the population has access to basic drinking water from an improved source.

Sanitation is about more than toilets, it is about the coupling of behaviours, facilities and services that provide the hygienic environment that children need to fight diseases and grow up healthy. Adequate sanitation is essential to childhood survival and development. Poor sanitation puts children at risk of childhood diseases and malnutrition that can impact their overall development and learning. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 87% of the population has basic sanitation services (i.e., use of improved facilities which are not shared with other households). Still, however, 3% of the population has limited sanitation services, 6% use unimproved sanitation services and 3% use open defecation.

Good hygiene is critical for preventing the spread of infectious diseases and helping children to lead long and healthy lives. Good hygiene can help to prevent children from missing school, which results in better learning outcomes. For families, good hygiene means avoiding illness and spending less on health care. In some contexts, good hygiene can also secure a family's social status and help individuals to maintain their self-confidence. Good hygiene, however, is difficult to practice without the right knowledge and skills, adequate community support and the belief that one's own behaviour can make a difference. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 87% of the population use a hand-washing facility with soap and water.

### Mortality Attributed to Unsafe WASH Services

Inadequate WASH are important risks to health, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. The impact of unsafe WASH on death rates of children under five and mothers in the year after childbirth is important to understand; unfortunately, these data are not available. Data are available, however, as it relates to mortality rate attributed to exposure to unsafe WASH (SDG 3.9.2). Among Eastern Caribbean countries with available data, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has the highest mortality rate attributed to exposure to unsafe WASH at 1.3 per 100,000 population; higher than the average of 0.9 per 100,000 population for Caribbean Small States.

## Mortality Attributed to Air Pollution

The drivers of air pollution are closely related to those of climate change. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, mortality rates attributed to air pollution is 48 per 100,000 population; this is higher than the average for Caribbean Small States (42 per 100,000 population) and the Eastern Caribbean (37 per 100,000 population).

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are a number of areas in which concerted and sustained action are needed to ensure the rights of all young people – both girls and boys – are realised in the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. These general observations are being made with the acknowledgement that a complete equity-based analysis of the situation of young people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines depends on the availability of data, particularly disaggregated data on different aspects that might influence their lives, including gender, age, nationality and socio-economic status; such data are not always readily available for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Data that are available are not real-time; in many cases, the data are several years or a decade old. Outdated data makes it difficult to analyse the current situation of young people and changes over time. Another data challenge was the lack of comparable data with other ECA countries and territories.

Although the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and development partners produce some very meaningful and relevant data related to young people, existing data does not capture the full range of issues that allow for an in-depth assessment of the situation of young people related to health, education, employment, poverty, social welfare, child protection and justice, among others. There appears to be little coordination of effort across ministries/ agencies and sectors to maximise data collection, and to collect and use data in a harmonised manner on an agreed upon set of indicators relevant to young people.

Limited data hinders opportunities for evidence-based programme and policy planning, and proper monitoring and analysis of the situation of young

people, but also impacts the ability to plan and allocate resources to advance the needs and rights of young people. In addition, lack of data limits the ability to analyse whether the situation of young people has improved over time in the areas of poverty reduction, education and employment, protection from violence and exploitation, improved access to health and proper nutrition, and more.

Similarly, sparse historical data limits the ability to do trend comparisons and to analyse whether the situation of young people has improved over time in the areas of poverty reduction, education and employment, protection from violence and exploitation, health and nutrition, and more. Due to the lack of longitudinal data on poverty, education and employment data, it is not possible to analyse whether the socio-economic situation of young people is better, worse or the same as it was five to ten years ago in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

As it relates to child protection and justice for children, government agencies responsible for child protection and justice for children do not collect and disseminate real-time data. Data that are collected are not disaggregated by age or focused on adolescents or youth, which does not allow for an in-depth assessment of the situation of violence, abuse and exploitation of young people, including gender-based violence.

Gender is a cross-cutting topic in this situation analysis. In some areas, differences between girls and boys are reported on by the government, especially in education; however, in other areas, gender differences are not reported. For instance, more girls than boys are finishing secondary education, while boys are more likely to repeat grades and to drop out of school which relegates them to accepting low-paying and low-skills jobs, impacting their future earning potential.

There is a need to better assess gender inequalities in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including as it relates to tertiary education, TVET, and employment, as well as exposure to different types of violence, abuse and exploitation, engagement in offending behaviours, and access to protection and social services, and health care. Data are needed to create evidence-



based policies and programmes aimed at promoting the rights of young people as called for by the CRC, CEDAW and SDGs.

## STRATEGIC THINKING

The idea behind the SDGs is to create a global movement to advance work on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; therefore, governments should frame their development plans and policies for the next years based on this globally agreed upon 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:

- **Mobilising and channelling resources** to the appropriate sectors at the appropriate time for optimal production
- **Enforcing standards and regulations**, specifically operationalising legislation and policies identified and/or in draft form
- **Establishing a mix of social partnerships with key actors**, including local councils, civil society, research institutions, the private sector
- **Improving systems for generating, collating and managing data and information** so that it is easily accessible and shared across different agencies and with partners.

This situation analysis of young people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines revealed there is a real need to strengthen cooperation around the needs and rights of young people. This requires a deep dive<sup>2</sup> into how to **build better partnerships for smart planning, problem-solving and innovation** to accelerate results for young people in the areas of:

- **Education**, with a focus on strengthening the quality of primary and secondary education, which requires improvements to teaching and learning materials, expanded coverage of information and communication technology, and human capital of school personnel.

- **TVET**, with a focus on partnering with the private sector to identify and develop market-driven TVET opportunities for young people.
- **Health and well-being**, with a focus on improving adolescent health, reducing teenage pregnancy and adolescent fertility rates, preventing drug and alcohol abuse, and addressing adolescent mental health to reduce suicide among young people.
- **Social protection**, with a focus on multidimensional child poverty and poverty among adolescents, and the impact of COVID-19 on multidimensional poverty, so that the Eastern Caribbean governments and development partners can more effectively focus on policy efforts to alleviate children's deprivations and achieve sustainable poverty eradication.
- **Child protection**, with a focus on strengthening child protection systems and community-based services for child victims of violence, abuse and exploitation, and their families, particularly in countries/territories where child protection systems and services are lacking or few and far between.
- **Climate change**, with a focus on strengthening the capacities of the government to respond to climate change and climate crisis, to bring together specialised expertise to strengthen disaster risk reduction (DRR) to ensure that hazards do not become disasters, and to devote greater attention and resources to shielding children and young people from these risks, and to enhance their resilience. As a cross-cutting priority, particular attention must be paid to addressing the magnified risks faced by the most vulnerable children and young people, and to meeting their specific needs.

As Saint Vincent and the Grenadines begins planning for a post-pandemic recovery, it is important that the government seizes on the opportunity to “**build back better**” by creating a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive society. This requires a more risk informed programming and smart planning, problem-solving and innovation to address challenges facing young people.

Strengthening public-private partnerships should be a key intervention. Developing a strategic business for results (B4R) agenda and framework that engages

2 A deep dive is a more thorough or comprehensive assessment and analysis of a subject or issue.

the private sector is crucial; however, it must be coordinated and done in cooperation with both the private and public sectors, including government partners. B4R and engagement with the private sector must be aligned with public policies and national agendas, including national action plans for the rights of young people.

Assessments and results-based monitoring are needed to better understand how B4R can be implemented in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and how B4R initiatives that engage the private sector contribute and lead to advancing the rights of young people and accelerating results for young people. This requires understanding how B4R initiatives impact the most vulnerable, including poor and marginalised populations, and contributes to improvements in systems of social protection.

## Strengthen Administrative Data on Young People

There are administrative data gaps related to young people; thus, there is a real need for government ministries/agencies and service providers in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to strengthen administrative data collection on young people's issues. Strengthening administrative data is an important and useful investment in resources.

In recent years, globally, there has been increased interest among governments and development partners to explore ways to strengthen and use existing administrative data to monitor and report on young people's health, education, employment, poverty, social welfare, protection and access to justice, as well as exposure to violence, exploitation and crime. Administrative data are an important source of information that can often be readily accessed and used to complement prevalence studies on a wide range of subject matter; in particular, young people's access to education, health care, essential services, protection and justice. Administrative data can also be used to measure progress towards SDG targets and indicators that do not require survey data.

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