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May 2021 | R2106



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Challenges to
Measuring Social
Programmes for
At-risk Youth



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Challenges to Measuring Social Programmes for At-Risk Youth

Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI)
Kingston, Jamaica

This study is co-funded by the European Union.

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Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation	MYF	Multi-care Youth Foundation
CRP	Child Resiliency Programme	NCVP	National Commission on Violence Prevention
CSJP	Citizen Security and Justice Programme	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
CSP	Citizen Security Plan	PMI	Peace Management Initiative
FFP	Fight for Peace	RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
GOJ	Government of Jamaica	TOC	Theory of Change
HOPE	Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
JCCF	Jamaica Combined Cadet Force	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies		
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning		

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Executive Summary



Anti-violence interventions

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but there is

NO BASIS FOR ASSESSING

**effectiveness
or outcomes**

Despite the financial investment in social interventions for at-risk youth over the last several decades in Jamaica, the extent to which those interventions are effective is questionable as there has not been a noticeable nor sustained impact on the high rates of youth involved violence. Anti-violence interventions over the world, such as those that target at-risk youth to change their behaviour and divert them from violent crime, are designed and implemented because they seem to make obvious sense that they will work, but there is no basis for assessing the interventions' effectiveness or outcomes. This weakness in monitoring and evaluating anti-violence social interventions, and the problem of not knowing their outcomes and whether or not they "work" has been recognized in Jamaica for at least two decades.

Young men who are at risk of becoming involved in violent crime are a primary target of social interventions that, in general, aim to change their behaviour, provide them with a marketable skill, and divert them from joining gangs.



However, despite an investment of J \$387 billion in a plethora of such interventions for over a decade, there has been neither a widespread change in the most obvious violence indicators (shootings and murders), nor have the interventions produced evidence that suggest that they are "working".

These ostensible failures have been

attributed to challenges with the monitoring and evaluation of the social interventions. Other consistently identified weaknesses are in programme design, capacity, coordination, sustainability, and transparency.

There is an important point to be made about transparency. Access to monitoring, evaluation, and learning

Despite the financial investment in social interventions for at-risk youth over the last several decades in Jamaica, the extent to which those interventions are effective is questionable as there has not been a noticeable nor sustained impact on the high rates of youth involved violence.

reports of social interventions is necessary for transparency and accountability, not just among donors and programme stakeholders, but also civil society and the general population. Access to intervention information,

which includes the project documents, as well as the framework and evaluation reports, allows stakeholders to assess a knowledge pool and better practices to tailor their programmes with knowledge of what work or hasn't worked elsewhere.

Ordinary citizens have a right to know how their tax dollars are being spent, what are the programmes the government is pursuing in the name of citizen security, and how are the programme outcomes being assessed.

Using the United Nations Development Assistance Framework Companion Guide, the report identified the foundational components of a coherent monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework. Applied to a sample of ten social programmes targeting at-risk youth, an assessment was made regarding whether a programme had a monitoring and evaluation framework, whether a framework was developed using a theory of change or results chain, if a baseline assessment was done against which measurement could occur, and if there was a data collection process to collect monitoring data. The aim was to determine the extent to which the sample of interventions targeting at-risk youth, and ultimately the high levels of crime and violence, have included these basic components into their design in such a way that we might know what the interventions' outcomes are.

Six of the ten programmes had all four components. Eight of the ten programmes had MEL frameworks, had established a baseline against which to measure change resulting from the intervention, and considered data collection in their framework. Seven of the programmes used a theory of change in designing their framework. Collaboration and coordination between various interventions appear to be limited, even though they all possess the same primary objective: to reduce the risk factors and increase the strength factors of youths at risk of participating in crime and violence, thereby improving their chances of becoming contributing members of society, and not another murder statistic.

Of the 10 programmes assessed:



6

of the programmes had all four components.



8

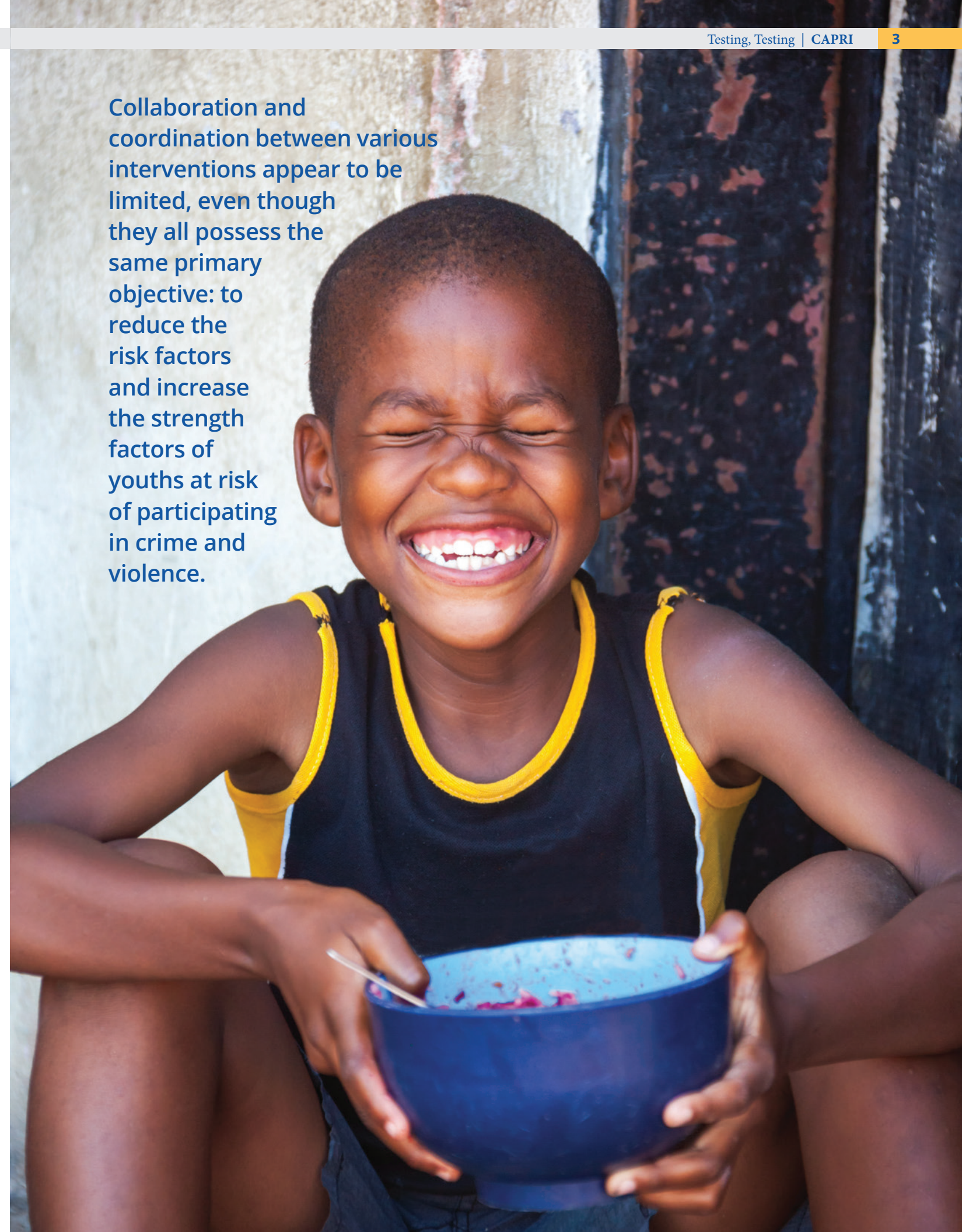
had MEL frameworks, had established a baseline against which to measure change resulting from the intervention, and considered data collection in their framework.



7

used a theory of change in designing their framework.

Collaboration and coordination between various interventions appear to be limited, even though they all possess the same primary objective: to reduce the risk factors and increase the strength factors of youths at risk of participating in crime and violence.



Recommendations



1 Create and maintain a central coordination unit for social/anti-violence interventions. This should be implemented and maintained by the Citizen Security Secretariat.

The recent creation of the Citizen Security Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the Citizen Security Plan is an opportunity to create a central entity to list and coordinate social interventions. This would augur well for reducing overlap, particularly where there are several interventions underway in one community, and for understanding an intervention's place in the broader gamut of social programmes. Further, that entity can identify the need for MEL support where an intervention is lacking.

2 Expand the training and use of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning. This recommendation should fall under the purview of the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Branch at the Office of the Prime Minister.

As the GoJ seeks to enact a whole-of-government approach efforts should be made to build the capacity across the various MDA'S. The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Branch, situated at the Office of the Prime Minister, has already started trying to work with various entities to expand their capacity. However, there is not only a lack of capacity in MEL, but even where agencies do have MEL personnel, they are often underutilised, and in many instances are not engaged in intervention design from the outset. Concepts such as theory of change, results chains, and baseline measures, as well as an underscoring of the role of MEL from the inception of an intervention, should be integral to all and any social/anti-violence programme, as well as the distinction between outcomes and outputs.



3 Establish a working group of MEL stakeholders, supported by requisite professionals, with the specific task of reviewing the frameworks for the existing programmes, and adding MEL where it is missing or inadequate. This effort should be led by the Citizen Security Secretariat.

A working group of MEL would serve two purposes. The first is to establish a network of officers who can develop a working relationship with each other to facilitate a multi-sectoral approach. Secondly, a comprehensive review can provide recommendations to address gaps in the existing programmes and provide guidelines that can be used by other stakeholders. The working group should also develop a tool kit that is accessible to NGOs to assist in developing their MEL frameworks.



4 Publish on a publicly-accessible website the programme frameworks for all government-supported interventions and require the same of NGOs. This effort should be led by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

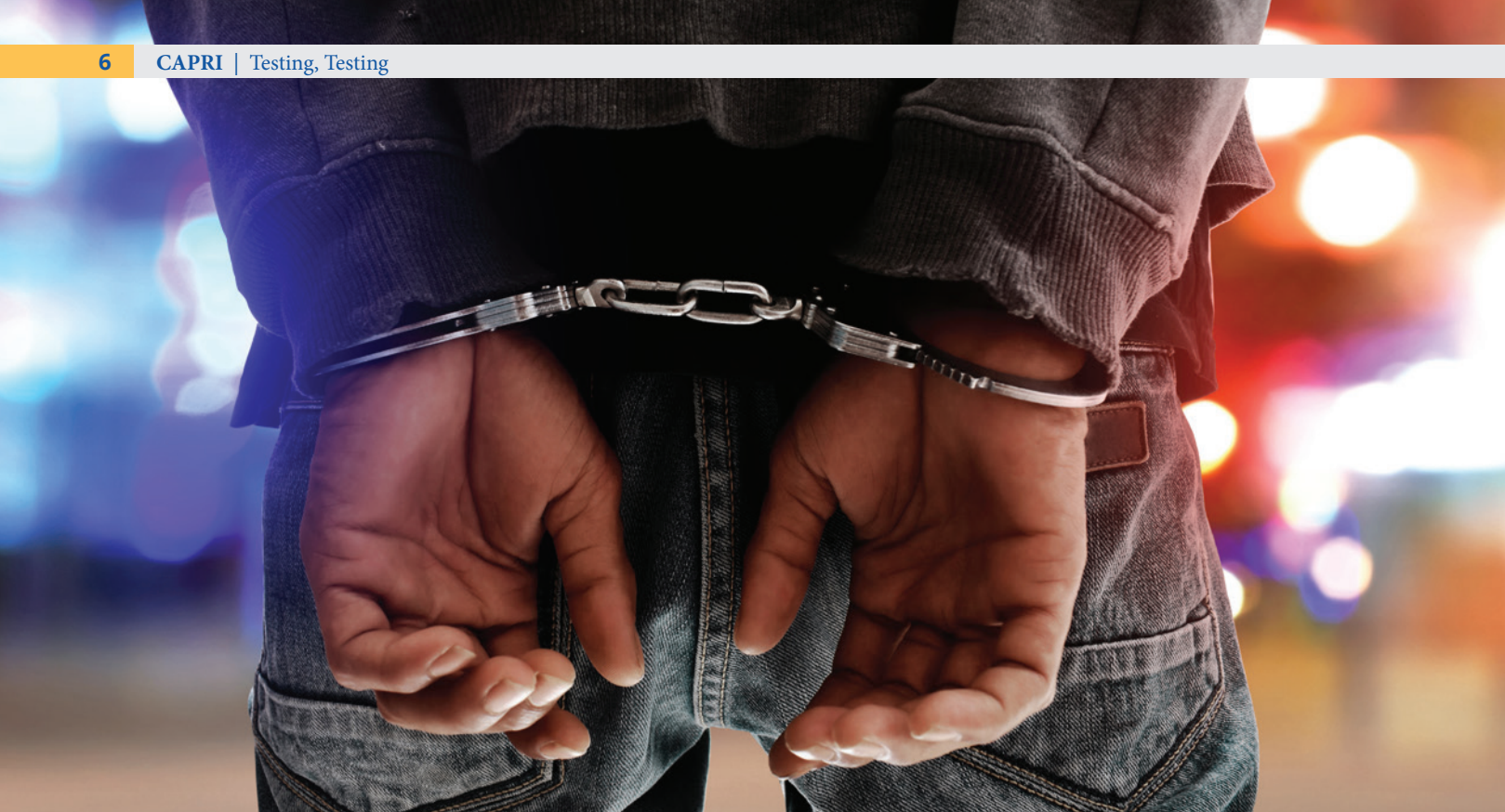
The GoJ has started the process of transparency through its Jamaica Open Data portal. It should go further by uploading programme frameworks for all government interventions and require the same of NGOs. Whether by expanding the Open Data portal to include these frameworks or uploading them to a Ministry or central website where they can be readily accessed. Good governance requires open access for accountability to occur.



5 Maximize the use of Geographic Information Systems in the coordination efforts. As the Citizen Security Secretariat would be responsible for the centralisation of the social interventions, this they should also have oversight for this.

The UNDAF Companion Guide highlighted the benefits of using real-time technology for monitoring. The government currently uses GIS for mapping crime and violence areas in communities. The GIS system can be used to track social interventions being conducted in various communities as well as which actors are active in the community. Making CSS the coordinating entity and simultaneously expanding the using of GIS a coordination tool can help to create an effective and efficient coordinating mechanism.





1

Introduction



Males under 35 years represented

32%
of victims

FOR CATEGORY ONE CRIMES
but

80%
OF ALL HOMICIDE VICTIMS

Despite the considerable financial investment in social programmes for at-risk youth over the last several decades in Jamaica, the extent to which those interventions are effective is questionable, as there has not been a noticeable nor sustained impact on the high rates of youth-involved violence. The absence of results, and of any other evidence that shows what an intervention's outcomes are, means that there is no way of knowing if the goals of diverting at-risk youth from violent crime are being met, nor is there any empirical basis on which to select or pursue interventions to reduce the risk factors that propel youth to become engaged in crime and violence.

In short, we do not know “what works.”

Violent crime in Jamaica has been described as an “epidemic and painful disease that has reached crisis levels.”¹ Jamaica has the highest per capita murder rate in the Latin America-Caribbean region.² The main victims and the main perpetrators of violence are young males from volatile, socio-economically challenged communities. These young men are generally unemployed (in the formal sector), undereducated, and under 35 years old.^{3,4} Between 2013 and 2018, males under 35 years old represented 77 percent of all perpetrators arrested and charged with a category one crime, even

though they only represent 20 percent of the population.^{5,6} During that same period males under 35 years represented 32 percent of victims for category one crimes but 80 percent of all homicide victims. In parallel, violent gangs, largely comprised of young men, were responsible for 63 percent of murders.⁷ As the Minister of National Security stated in November 2020, “The boys within our youth cohort are the main constituents of criminal gangs; we are losing our young men to crime.”⁸

Efforts to stem violence and lower the murder rate in Jamaica have been underway for several decades. These

1 “Jamaica’s Crime Problem is an Epidemic and Painful Disease, says PSOJ,” Loop Jamaica, February 04, 2021, www.loopjamaica.com/content/jamaicas-crime-problem-epidemic-and-painful-disease-says-psoj.

2 Parker Asmann and Katie Jones, “InSight Crime’s 2020 Homicide Round-Up,” InSight Crime, January 29, 2020, <https://insightcrime.org/news/analysis/2020-homicide-round-up/>.

3 CAPRI “Zero Murders: Searching for Lessons from Two Decades of Anti-Violence Interventions in August Town,” Kingston: Jamaica, Caribbean Policy Research Institute 2019, 23; Delores E. Smith and Katherine E. Green, “Violence among Youth in Jamaica: A Growing Public Health Risk and Challenge,” *Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica* 22 (2007): 417-424.

4 Smith and Green, “Violence among Youth in Jamaica,” 417-424.

5 JCF Statistics and Information Unit, communication with author, October 07, 2020. Category one crimes include murder, shootings, rape, aggravated assault, break-ins larceny, and robbery.

6 Males 12 to 35 years old was used to calculate this figure.

7 Calculated based on the 2013 -2018 percentage of gang-related murders as recorded by the JCF.

8 “USAID Awards Over \$156m Towards Youth Crime Prevention Programme,” Loop Jamaica, November 23, 2020, www.loopjamaica.com/content/usaaid-awards-over-156m-towards-youth-crime-prevention-programme.

Between 2013 and 2018, males under 35 years old represented 77 percent of all perpetrators arrested and charged with a category one crime, even though they only represent 20 percent of the population.

efforts take two broad forms: crime prevention and crime control. The former aims to prevent criminality before it occurs, or from reoccurring in the case of rehabilitation of offenders, and the latter deals with enforcement approaches which react to existing criminality.⁹ Crime prevention efforts largely take the form of interventions that aim to increase the protective factors and reduce the risk factors that are thought to contribute to or correlate with crime and violence. While the lack of data makes it difficult to count how many, numerous interventions have been implemented in scores of communities across the island, by the government and non-governmental actors, over the past three-plus decades. The actual number is unknown, as there is no central database accounting for them, but there have certainly been several dozen, if not hundreds. Between fiscal year 2007/2008 and the end of 2017/2018, the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) spent an estimated J\$387 billion on youth interventions.¹⁰ Comparatively, for that same time-period the government spent J\$898 billion on education.¹¹

As has obtained the world over, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on Jamaica's vulnerable youths' education and prospects.¹² The closure of schools and the shift to remote schooling



The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) spent an estimated

J\$387B

on

YOUTH INTERVENTIONS

have resulted in many students, in particular young males who are already facing negative risk factors that could push them into delinquency, trailing behind in their education.¹³ High-risk young males, the main would-be perpetrators and victims of crime and violence are at risk of becoming detached from school, extracurricular youth activities, and sports, that would have acted as an anchor to their participation in legitimate institutions.¹⁴ Factors such as a lack of positive and consistent adult supervision and lack of access to the technology needed for these vulnerable youths to pursue their education, would exacerbate their already tenuous situations. While both the public and private sectors have attempted to meet the education

needs of these youths,¹⁵ the pandemic has nevertheless further compounded already challenging circumstances, leading to a greater number of youths exiting the formal education system, and as such increasing the population of youths at risk of participating in crime and violence.¹⁶

The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of developing specialized and targeted social interventions and their corresponding frameworks to be flexible and adaptable to changing social, economic, and political environments.¹⁷ Several such interventions would have been impacted by the constraints of the pandemic response, as it likely would have been difficult if not impossible to execute the activities that were planned pre-pandemic. Indeed, of the 10 interventions examined in this study, three indicated that the pandemic impacted programme delivery. As has occurred across a spectrum of such endeavours, one programme indicated that in the absence of in-person interaction, they administered psychosocial intervention remotely to their participants, and their parents as well.¹⁸

Despite the hundreds of billions of dollars spent over the last few decades, the extent to which anti-violence programmes,



particularly those targeting at-risk youth, are effective is equivocal, given that there has been no lasting fall in the murder rate over the period.¹⁹ Apart from that arguably crude indicator, there are few other indicators that provide any reliable evidence as to the interventions' effectiveness or outcomes. For example, a recent evaluation of the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (phase three) revealed that despite a US\$42 million spend over six years (2014 to 2020), the programme was not sustainable, nor did it have the intended impact on the reduction of murders and shootings, the two main indicators used to measure violence in communities.²⁰ The programme experienced challenges with its continuity and viability amidst its transition to ownership by the

Government of Jamaica. Programmes, especially those funded by international development partners are often timebound, with the funding ceasing after the project has been underway for a period of time. Rarely has it been seen where these programmes have been developed with a sustainability plan laid out to ensure longevity for impact.²¹

These are not new observations, nor are they unique to Jamaica. Many anti-violence interventions the world over, notably those that target at-risk youth to change their behaviour, are widely implemented without being adequately tested because they seem to make obvious sense that they will work. But often when these interventions are tested with randomized controlled trials (a

type of rigorous scientific evaluation) many have been found to be ineffective or even cause harm.²² Further, without evidence garnered from the monitoring and evaluation framework, it would be difficult to distinguish between success and failure, and failure might be rewarded as resources are directed into interventions that are substandard. Jamaica, like many other countries, does not have an evaluation culture; evidence-based programming in areas such as violence interventions is not standard procedure.²³ A 2010 World Health Organization report found: "There is a lack of evidence from middle- and, in particular, low-income countries, on preventing armed and other violence, despite the fact that they suffer disproportionate levels of both. This

9 Brandon C. Welsh and David P. Farrington, *Crime Prevention and Public Policy*, (The Oxford handbook of crime prevention, 2012), 3-19.

10 Sophia Whyte-Givans, "Rationalizing Government of Jamaica's Expenditure on Youth, Fiscal Years 2007/08 -2017/18," New Employment Opportunities Task Force, 2018, 29.

11 The figure was calculated based on the actual recurrent, Capital A and Capital B budget figures. The estimates were used for the 2010/2011 fiscal year as the budget was not available on the website for this financial year.

12 CAPRI, "Insult to Injury: The Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Communities in the Caribbean," Kingston: Jamaica, Caribbean Policy Research Institute, 2021.

13 Julie Jargon, "Why Boys Are More at Risk of Falling Behind During Remote School," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 24, 2020, www.wsj.com/articles/why-boys-are-more-at-risk-of-falling-behind-during-remote-school-11606222801.

14 "Filling Support Gaps for At-risk Youth in Jamaica during Pandemic-related School Closures," FHI 360, October 29, 2020, www.fhi360.org/news/filling-support-gaps-risk-youth-jamaica-during-pandemic-related-school-closures.

15 Garfield L. Angus, "'No Male Left Behind' at Yallahs High School," Jamaica Information Service, March 31, 2021, <https://jis.gov.jm/features/no-male-left-behind-at-yallahs-high-school/>.

16 FHI 360, "Filling Support Gaps for At-risk Youth in Jamaica"; UNICEF, "Challenges," accessed February 1, 2021 www.unicef.org/jamaica/lifelong-learning; FHI 360 is an international non-profit organization that operates in more than 60 countries around the world, to use research and evidence to design and deliver innovative programmes that change behaviours, increase access to services and improve lives.

17 "Guidelines for Programme Design, Monitoring and Evaluation," Department for Development Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, undated, www.oecd.org/derec/finland/38141776.pdf.

18 Kellie Magnus, Jamaica Country Lead and Chere Watson, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Fight for Peace Jamaica, interview with author, February 12, 2021.

19 Andrew Mclean and Sherrone Blake Lobba, "Assessment of Community Security and Transformation Programmes in Jamaica," United Nations Development Programme, 2009, <http://undp.org/content/dam/jamaica/docs/researchpublications/governance/CommunitySecurityAssessmentReport.pdf>; CAPRI, 2019.

20 David Rees and Andres Rengifo, "CSJP III Final Evaluation: Final Presentation," Ernst and Young, April 16, 2021.

21 "A New Approach: National Security Policy for Jamaica. Towards a Secure and Prosperous Nation," Government of Jamaica, 2014, <https://cabinet.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NATSEC-March-25-2014-1-1.pdf>.

22 Timothy D. Wilson and Lindsay P. Juarez, "Intuition is not Evidence: Prescriptions for Behavioral Interventions from Social Psychology," *Behavioral Science and Policy* 1, no. 1 (Spring, 2015), https://issuu.com/behavioralsciencepolicyassociation/docs/bsp_vol1is1_wilson_384f033534b21e.

23 CSJP personnel from the Ministry of National Security Citizen Security and Justice Programme, interview with author, April 17, 2019; Jamaican monitoring and evaluation expert, interview with author, January 26, 2020.

issue needs to be urgently addressed by enhancing routine monitoring, research, and evaluation capacity.²⁴

There is limited evidence in terms of what works to reduce violent crime in Latin America and Caribbean. A 2013 study reviewed more than 1,300 citizen security programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean and determined that only 7 percent conducted a robust evaluation.²⁵ Monitoring and evaluation are usually integral to interventions funded by international development partners (IDPs), and are often stated as important in the project plans of nationally funded initiatives, but a 2020 survey of anti-violence interventions found that Jamaica is only in a nascent stage of having the requisite capacity for monitoring and evaluation.²⁶ The Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) which ran from 2001-2020, and was institutionalized in the Ministry of National Security (MNS), was the largest and longest running anti-violence social intervention programme in Jamaica's history. It had a budget of over US\$89 million, and a staff of approximately 95 people. In the third and final phase of the programme, beginning in 2014, "a robust monitoring and evaluation system was put in place."²⁷ That is, the programme ran for 12 years before a monitoring and

evaluation unit was established.²⁸ Prior to the establishment of the unit in phase three of the intervention, phases one and two did produce mid-project evaluations and project completion reports, but these focused on outputs and activities, and did not measure change (nor would they have been able to do so).

The apparent lack of impact of social intervention programmes on Jamaica's high violence rates was the primary factor that led to the creation of the National Commission on Violence Prevention (NCVP). In December 2019, Jamaica's Cabinet approved its mandate, which included conducting "a comprehensive review of all existing public and private violence prevention programmes."²⁹ The NCVP was "established to address the gap between all the efforts that have gone into reducing violence... and their lack of correlation with the desired reduction in the incidence of violence." One of the first tasks of the newly created Commission was to undertake a listing of all anti-violence interventions in Jamaica in the last five years. Though the endeavour is ongoing (in 2021), they have counted 43 interventions carried out by 19 organisations. After interviews with several stakeholders and review of scores of programme/ project documents, one of the Commission's key preliminary

findings is that there are significant challenges with the monitoring and evaluation of interventions, specifically with capacity and documentation. A corollary finding is that there is a lack of coordination among stakeholders.³⁰

Regardless, this lack of validated knowledge as to "what works" to best inform replication has not forestalled ongoing social intervention efforts, as there remains a broad agreement that "something has to be done," and new initiatives are continually embarked upon.³¹ In November 2020, three social intervention projects primarily targeting at-risk youth, at a cost of J\$156 million, were launched. At that occasion, the Minister of National Security said that the government is "creating the framework for the implementation of transparent, evidence-based solutions in order to achieve clearly defined and time-sensitive outcomes."³²

The perceived lack of results and the challenges with monitoring and evaluation of interventions informed the Jamaican government's attempt, drafted in 2019, to integrate a "whole-of-government" approach in its Citizen Security Plan (CSP). The Citizen Security Plan, a key component of Plan Secure Jamaica, attempts to achieve

24 Mark A Bellis, et al., "Preventing and Reducing Armed Violence: What Works?" (Background Paper Oslo Conference on Armed Violence), Liverpool John Moores University, Centre for Public Health, the World Health Organization Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability, and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, April 2010, www.poa-iss.org/KIT/2010_What-works.pdf.

25 Instinto de Vida, "Latin America can Reduce Homicide by 50 Percent In 10 Years," Igarape Institute, Brazil, July 2017, 8, <https://igarape.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/11-08-2017-Campanha-Instinto-de-Vida-EN.pdf>.

26 Monitoring and Evaluation Expert, interview with author, January 26, 2021.

27 CAPRI, 2019; Orville Simmonds, Foreword to "Preventing Youth Violence. Evidence from the Citizen Security and Justice Programme III Case Management Approach" by Alva Marie Graham, Chaday Nelson, and Simone Smith-Parkin, April 2020, Citizen Security and Justice Programme III: Ministry of National Security.

28 "Project Details," Inter-American Development Bank, accessed February 1, 2021, www.iadb.org/en/projects-search?country=§or=&status=&query=citizen%20security%20and%20justice%20programme.

29 Chris Patterson, "Cabinet Approves Establishment of National Commission on Violence Prevention," Jamaica Information Service, December 20, 2019, <https://jis.gov.jm/cabinet-approves-establishment-of-national-commission-on-violence-prevention/>.

30 National Commission on Violence Prevention Officials, personal interview, February 3, 2021.

31 This action bias is a known phenomenon, not limited to anti-violence interventions, whereby there is a tendency to favour action over inaction, even when there is no evidence that it will lead to a better outcome than doing nothing would.

32 "USAID Awards Over \$156m Towards Youth Crime Prevention Programme," *Loop Jamaica*, November 23, 2020, www.loopjamaica.com/content/usaaid-awards-over-156m-towards-youth-crime-prevention-programme.

One study
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evaluation



a coordinated, comprehensive, and effective implementation of programmes in at-risk communities.³³ The CSP's monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework emphasizes that "what works for effective crime and violence reduction is a simultaneous application of a general principle of focus, and the involvement of delivery agencies."³⁴ The "focus" here speaks to "the people, places, and conditions that interventions attempt to address."³⁵ The CSP's monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan further states that stakeholders or single entities that operate in silos reduce their chances of achieving impact. For example, a coordinated multi-agency problem-solving approach that seeks to focus on circumstances that foster criminogenic activities in high violence communities, alongside increased police presence, would have more favourable impact than only increased police presence.³⁶ To ensure that the monitoring and evaluation framework for the CSP is implemented effectively, the Citizen Security Secretariat was established in 2020 as the oversight entity, responsible for overseeing the interventions and stakeholders.

Jamaican civil society's efforts to mobilise around the crime and violence problem also acknowledge the monitoring and evaluation weaknesses that have been inherent in previous initiatives. In 2019, Jamaica's leading private sector umbrella groups led the formation of a bi-partisan multi-stakeholder group, in developing the National Consensus on Crime. That initiative's monitoring and oversight body, which liaises with the CSP

This report seeks to examine if the interventions are based on a theory of change, have a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework, and the extent to which collaboration features in the intervention.

Secretariat, acknowledged the problem of inadequate monitoring and evaluation of crime and violence initiatives, and has sought to act as the primary coordinator between the respective ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) of the government and civil society in this endeavour. The National Consensus on Crime initiative includes an oversight secretariat with its own monitoring and evaluation framework, which aims to hold the government accountable to its commitments. The framework is applicable to a broad range of social intervention programmes, including those targeting at-risk youth.

Aside from the general recognitions by government and civil society that Jamaica's attempts at interventions must better account for monitoring and evaluation, how is this actually playing out in interventions currently underway? How well is Jamaica doing in heeding the several decades of lamenting the lack of evidence? Has anything changed from the situation where youth-focused

violence prevention interventions have not been designed, implemented, or monitored and evaluated in keeping with a minimum standard of accountability? Is there still a gap to be bridged, and how wide is it? In answering these questions, this report describes the context in which interventions aimed at at-risk youth are conceptualized and implemented in Jamaica; outlines what such an intervention ought to contain, such as the key concepts of theory of change, and a monitoring and evaluation framework; and, using a United Nations Development Assistance Framework guide, examines ten randomly selected interventions targeted at at-risk youth to evaluate the extent to which they are designed in such a way as to discern outcomes, and know if they are "working." The aim is to provide recommendations to bridge any identified gaps in these and other interventions' programme design, with particular regard to monitoring and evaluation, towards obtaining a better understanding of "what works" in anti-violence interventions, and directing

resources to where they stand the greatest chance of having a positive effect.

Methodology

The report utilizes a qualitative approach, which included a desk review of grey literature, existing studies, and other secondary sources, and elite interviews with monitoring and evaluation practitioners and other social intervention stakeholders. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework Companion Guide was used for examining the monitoring and evaluation approaches of the selected interventions.

Programme Selection

Ten programmes were selected for analysis, all whose target population is primarily underserved youth or children at-risk of crime and violence. Programmes fell into one of four categories that cover the scope of interventions aimed at at-risk youth. The first is the government-funded and government-implemented programme; the second donor-funded but government-implemented; and the third is donor-funded but NGO-implemented; while the final is donor-funded, government-run, but NGO-implemented. The objective of all of these

interventions is to mitigate the factors that put youth at risk, and in so doing prevent them from joining gangs and/or getting involved in violent crime and in conflict with the law.

For clarity, this report does not evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions, nor the extent to which they have successfully utilized any framework that they purport to have. Rather it seeks to examine if the interventions, as they are set out in the project documents (or according to the project stakeholders) are based on a theory of change, have a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework, and the extent to which collaboration features in the intervention. Where there is no explicit theory of change, results chain, or MEL, an attempt is made to ascertain the basis on which the intervention is designed/implemented, and how the intervention's outcomes are assessed. It should also be noted that these are not the only elements needed for having a complete framework. There are other key elements such as assumptions, indicators, inputs, and activities that are also germane to a properly designed framework.

Challenges

The initial requests for framework

documents were met with reluctance from several of the programme stakeholders, despite the reassurance that this report was not an assessment of the failure or success of the intervention; also, several of the interventions relayed that they had to seek the permission of the donors before they could share the information.³⁷ In some cases we did not receive the full suite of project documents that for analysis, and in other cases information was provided in an untimely manner, precluding an integrated analysis of the relevant aspects of the programme.

These challenges highlight the fact that none of the interventions' MEL frameworks are readily or publicly available. This is sub-optimal, as, if the objective is to have a noticeable positive long-term impact on reducing Jamaica's crime and violence, the details of social interventions should be available to stakeholders and to ordinary citizens. Transparency allows stakeholders to learn from each other, strengthens governance and accountability, improves efficiency in the allocation of scarce resources, increases the prospects for citizens to "buy in" to the programme, and augurs well for the coordination of interventions, all which are more likely to have a more sustainable long-term impact.

³³ Key stakeholder interview, September 2019. In his 2017/2018 Budget Presentation, Prime Minister Andrew Holness presented Plan Secure Jamaica, a "whole-of-government" national security plan centred around ten strategic areas (violence and crime, public order, corruption, community safety, territorial integrity, crisis response and resilience, justice, cyber defence, critical infrastructure protection, and economic security) with six strategic objectives, that is estimated to cost US\$346.7 million for implementation up to 2022/2023.

³⁴ Caty Clement, Spencer Chainey and Curline Beckford, "Monitoring and Performance Assessment Technical Services to Strengthen the Governance Framework of Jamaica's Citizen Security Plan," July 2020, 7.

³⁵ Clement, Chainey, and Beckford, "Monitoring," 7.

³⁶ Clement, Chainey, and Beckford, "Monitoring," 7.

³⁷ In honouring the request by some stakeholders that their frameworks not be shared publicly, we will not be able share the actual project documents.



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2

Context for Examining Interventions



Between 2013 and 2018,
19 male children
 aged
12-14 years
 HAVE BEEN CHARGED
 WITH MURDER

At-risk youth as a category of the population that require special attention is evident in almost all statements related to Jamaica's development. Jamaica's "Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan," which encompasses the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) states:

"Many Jamaicans are born into situations where little or no family support is provided. This has led to a breakdown in the transmission of wholesome values and has contributed to the relatively large number of unattached and otherwise "at-risk" youth in our society. We believe that this is at the centre of many of the behavioural problems that are manifested in our society ranging from delinquency among the youth to hardcore crimes."³⁸



According to the Citizen Security Plan,
3 out of 4
GANG MEMBERS

are between ages

12-30 yrs

Who is an At-Risk Youth?

In the Jamaican context, who is a youth differs from one government body to another. The Planning Institute of Jamaica

(PIOJ) classifies youth as persons aged 15–24 years.³⁹ However, the National Youth Policy uses the Commonwealth definition of 15–29 years.⁴⁰ In the third and final phase of the Citizen Security and Justice Project, the anti-gang interventions targeted children eight to 15 years old.⁴¹ The Citizen Security Plan speaks to the 12 to 30-year-old age group and their involvement in gang violence and who live in risky situations.⁴²

The terms "at-risk", "high-risk", and "unattached" are often used interchangeably when referring to youth from socio-economically marginalized and, often, volatile communities.⁴³ For the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP, as mentioned earlier this was the longest-running continuous anti-violence intervention programme ever attempted in Jamaica) at-risk youth

³⁸ Planning Institute of Jamaica, "Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan," 2009, 92.

³⁹ PIOJ, 2018, 419.

⁴⁰ Government of Jamaica, "Revised National Youth Policy 2017 – 2030, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Information," 2017.

⁴¹ Rochelle Williams, "Boys 8-15 Years Old Being Targeted Under Anti-gang Strategy," Jamaica Information Service, June 13, 2018, <https://jis.gov.jm/boys-8-15-years-old-being-targeted-under-anti-gang-strategy/>.

⁴² There have been 12-year-olds who have been charged with murder.

⁴³ Some government stakeholders refer to NEET youths – Not Employed, Educated, or Trained. Rather than using the term "unattached," the stakeholders are being specific in the target population they are trying to reach with the interventions. Lieutenant Colonel Martin Rickman, National Coordinator HOPE, interview with author, February 24, 2021.

"Many Jamaicans are born into situations where little or no family support is provided. This has led to a breakdown in the transmission of wholesome values and has contributed to the relatively large number of unattached and otherwise "at-risk" youth in our society."



is “a general term used to describe young people at greater vulnerability for problematic behaviours, namely violence, substance abuse, school failure, juvenile delinquency, and mental health disorders.”⁴⁴

Youth from all socio-economic backgrounds can encounter or are susceptible to environmental risk factors, and most youth engage in risky behaviours during their adolescence.⁴⁵ However, youth are thought to be at risk when there is an increased likelihood of them becoming a perpetrator or victim of crime and violence. Risk factors in their immediate environments reduce

their chances of becoming productive, contributing members of society.⁴⁶ “High-risk” youth generally have multiple negative factors that tend to increase their engagement in maladaptive behaviour. Negative factors can include adverse familial relationships, abuse, poverty, and residing in underserved communities.⁴⁷

Unattached youths are school dropouts with no real skills, “detached from formal social systems, do not participate in any established social groups such as church or community groups, and they have weak or non-existent familial support.”⁴⁸ For males, this detachment from legitimate social groups or systems is thought to

increase their chances of participating in criminal groups, especially violent gangs, and the activities pursued by these groups.⁴⁹ Based on this definition (in the age group 14 to 24 years, unemployed or outside the labour force, and not in school or in training) there were 127,000 unattached youth in Jamaica, according to a 2007 estimate, one in four of the youth population.⁵⁰ Of the 127,000 nearly two-thirds are female, but there is a correlation between unattached males outside the labour force and high crime: in the highest-crime parishes, 50 percent of males arrested for category one crimes are males between the ages of 12 and 25

44 Alva May Graham, Chanday Nelson and Simone Smith-Parkin, “Preventing Youth Violence: Evidence from the Citizen Security and Justice Programme III Case Management Approach,” Ministry of National Security, Department for International Development, Inter-American Development Bank, Global Affairs Canada, 2020.

45 Resnick and Burt, “Youth At-risk”; Seek Moon, Patton, and Rao, “An Ecological Approach”.

46 Kristin Anderson Moore, “Defining the Term ‘At-risk,’” *Child Trends*, 2006, www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/01/DefiningAtRisk1.pdf; Steven W. Edwards and Michelle Rodak, “Youth At-risk: A Global Challenge,” *US-China Education Review* 6, no. 11 (2016): 665-670.

47 Resnick and Burt, “Youth At-risk,” 172-188.

48 Government of Jamaica, “Revised National Youth Policy 2017 – 2030,” 49.

49 Andre Haughton and K’adamawe K’nife, “Social Entrepreneurship: Reducing Crime and Improving the Perception of Police Performance within Developing Countries,” *International Journal of Entrepreneurship* 17 (2013): 61; Brenda Geiger and Michael Fischer, “Poor, Abused, and Neglected Children’s Prospects in a Fair Society,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 4, no. 3 (1999): 249-258.

50 There has not been another or more recent estimate of the number of unattached or at-risk youth since 2007.

years old, compared to approximately 1 percent of those arrested being females in that age group.⁵¹ According to recent police reports, however, there is an emerging trend of females becoming more involved in crime and violence.⁵²

For the purposes of this study, the term “at-risk youth” is used, with the understanding that this refers to youth who, though not necessarily, are likely to be unattached, and for the most part, are male, and who are at a high risk for becoming engaged in violent crime.

Why At-Risk Youth Matter

Jamaica, similar to several other countries in the Latin American Caribbean region, experiences high rates of violent crime, which mostly result from gang-related violence, and young men are the primary perpetrators and victims of violent crimes, particularly murder. Between 2010 and 2018, gang-related violence accounted for 56 percent of all homicides, with a high of 78 percent in 2013.⁵³ According to the Citizen Security Plan, three-quarters of gang members are between the ages of 12 and 30 years.⁵⁴ Between 2013 and 2018, youths age 12 to 29 years represented 64 percent of persons arrested for category one crimes; males account for 98 percent

of those charged.⁵⁵ Children in gangs is increasingly a problem. Between 2013 and 2018, 19 male children, aged 12 to 14 years have been charged with murder. The main witness that testified in the trial of one of Jamaica’s most notorious criminals, a self-confessed murderer, told the court that he joined the Clansman gang when he was 13 years old.⁵⁶ In 2017, 58 teenagers were arrested and charged with murder, including a 14-year-old boy.⁵⁷ In that same year 78 teenagers were arrested for shooting, 148 for illegal possession of firearm, and 63 for aggravated robbery (with a weapon).⁵⁸ As such, young men, particularly those who are “at-risk” and “unattached” are the principal targets of a large proportion of the interventions that aim to curtail or prevent violent crime. Reaching this target population is critical to shifting Jamaica’s trajectory towards achieving its developmental goals, particularly as it regards improved citizen security, and all the related gains that would come from that. Effectively changing the behaviour of these young men, however, has thus proved elusive, and there is no certainty in knowing “what works” to do so.

Interventions Targeting At-Risk Youth

Interventions aimed at at-risk youth are most often conceptualized to change the drivers of and correlating factors with the virulent violence that characterizes Jamaica’s society and culture. “Social intervention” for the purpose of this study, then, is defined as a programme in which there is active involvement in the lives of the persons that are vulnerable to participating or becoming entrenched in gangs/ criminal groups, with prosocial behaviour change often being the overarching objective, whether through skills training or provision of psychosocial services.^{59, 60}

The problem of not measuring and hence not knowing outcomes is pervasive in Jamaican efforts to bring about change through policies and programmes, across all sectors. A 2018 voluntary review of the status of Vision 2030 noted that: “the lack of timely, adequate, and appropriate data impedes evidence-based decision-making and effective targeting of interventions.”⁶¹ The 2016 National Poverty Reduction Programme Policy noted that “there are institutional challenges including lack of capacities, weak monitoring and evaluation and information systems,

51 “Unattached Youth in Jamaica,” HEART Trust-National Training Agency, 2009, www.mona.uwi.edu/cop/sites/default/files/Unattached%20youth_0.pdf.

52 Chevon Campbell, “JCF Observes Growing Trend of Women Involved in Crime,” *Nationwide News Network*, April 26, 2021, <https://nationwideradiojm.com/jcf-observes-growing-number-of-women-involved-in-crime/>.

53 CAPRI, “Guns Out: The Splintering of Jamaica’s Violent Gangs,” Kingston: Jamaica, Caribbean Policy Research Institute, 2020, 1.

54 Key Stakeholder, interview with author, September 2019; CAPRI, 2020, 15.

55 JCF Statistics and Information Management Unit, correspondence with author, October 7, 2020.

56 Nickoy Wilson, “I killed on Tessa’s Orders – Witness– Ex-member Outlines Structure of Clansman Gang,” *Gleaner*, November 19, 2016, <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20191116/i-killed-teshas-orders-witness-ex-member-outlines-structure-clansman>.

57 Corey Robinson, “Young and Dangerous – Teenage Gangsters Driving up Crime,” *Gleaner*, January 18, 2018, <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20180121/young-dangerous-teenage-gangsters-driving-crime-rate>.

58 Robinson, “Young and Dangerous.”

59 Bond Gebo, “The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Strategy,” in *The Handbook of Gangs* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 2015): 393.

60 Douglas McIntosh, “Behaviour Change Programme to Help At-risk Youths,” Jamaica Information Service, September 18, 2018, <https://jis.gov.jm/behaviour-change-programme-to-help-at-risk-youth/>; PIOJ, “Jamaica Social Protection Strategy” 2014, <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/jam171194.pdf>.

61 PIOJ, “Jamaica Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” Government of Jamaica, June 2018, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19499JamaicaMain_VNR_Report.pdf.

lack of clear definition of roles, and programme overlaps.”⁶²

There are several examples of interventions broadly or specifically aimed at at-risk youth, which we do not know if they “worked” because of an absence of systematic, evidence-based monitoring and evaluation. A 2012 youth situational analysis stated that “some agencies fail to establish clear objectives and targets, as well as to progressively measure, monitor, and evaluate.”⁶³ The National Youth Policy 2017-2030, is the GOJ’s primary policy framework that “seeks to advance the overall development of Jamaican youth.” It too acknowledges that social interventions have experienced a confluence of challenges that has affected service delivery to the target group: “The sector functions in an unsystematic manner without any guiding legislation or regulations, without an effective monitoring and evaluation system, without sufficient resources, and lacking an effective coordinated approach among stakeholders.”⁶⁴ Nevertheless, a monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework for how the goals and objectives of the policy will be achieved is absent from that policy document.

There is a diverse range of challenges and needs that the at-risk youth population experiences, ranging from psychological

A 2018 voluntary review of the status of Vision 2030 noted that: “the lack of timely, adequate, and appropriate data impedes evidence-based decision-making and effective targeting of interventions.”

and emotional to socio-economic. Social interventions generally aim to provide support systems to prevent youths from dropping out of school, or to engage youths that have already dropped out with skills and training that they can use to be productive and to have legitimate income streams (on the assumption that many of the youths involved in crime and violence do so because they do not have access to legitimate income streams).⁶⁵ Accordingly, lack of employment opportunities and inequality in the quality of education are often cited as the causes of the at-risk youths’ involvement in crime and violence. Further, there is a relationship between education and disposition towards criminality. A 2016

study of incarcerated persons found that 49 percent of their sample had either dropped out of secondary school or left without attaining any subjects.⁶⁶ Thus many interventions targeting at-risk youth involve skills training.⁶⁷

Perhaps the largest programme targeting at-risk youth in Jamaica in this regard is the HEART/National Service Training Academy. As the state’s principal skills-training-for-employment institution, which had a J\$30.5 billion budget between fiscal years 2014/2015 and 2018/2019, its stated mission is to “decrease the instances of unattached youth” (among other objectives).^{68, 69} A 2020 Auditor General’s report found that, despite the

institution’s leadership’s awareness of challenges in monitoring and evaluation for which a mitigation plan was created, the institute failed to adhere to the plan because of ineffective management and oversight, and poor coordination: “HEART did not demonstrate that it effectively monitored” its unattached youth programmes and failed to conduct “adequate evaluations” for the “viability of the training programmes.”⁷⁰

These weaknesses are well acknowledged

by policy makers: Jamaica’s current Minister of National Security has regularly highlighted the government’s commitment to “redirect and mainstream social interventions, using evidenced-based approaches subject to continuous monitoring” in the efforts to reduce crime and violence, acknowledging that this approach had been particularly lacking for social interventions.⁷¹ But where the state and other actors still carry out interventions targeting at-risk

and unattached youth, with the implied objective of reducing the chances of them joining gangs and becoming murderers, to what extent are these approaches being adopted?

The following section sets out a model framework that could be used to assess interventions, such as social and behavioural interventions targeting at-risk youth, so as to garner an understanding of the outcomes.

62 Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, “National Policy on Poverty: National Poverty Reduction Programmes,” Government of Jamaica, December 2016, <https://mof.gov.jm/downloads/associatedentities/goj-green-papers/NATIONAL-POVERTY-POLICY-Green-Paper-December-2016-Public.pdf>.

63 Orville Simmonds, Foreword to “Preventing Youth Violence. Evidence from the Citizen Security and Justice Programme III Case Management Approach”; Government of Jamaica, “Revised National Youth Policy 2017 – 2030”; Joy Moncrieffe, “Qualitative Survey on the Situation of Youth in Jamaica: “Ah Suh di Ting Set.” IDB/GoJ Youth Development Programme, 2012, 129.

64 Government of Jamaica, “Revised National Youth Policy 2017 – 2030,” 50.

65 Kimberly Hibbert, “Study Reveals Link Between Unemployment and Crime,” Observer, November 03, 2014, http://jamaicaobserver.com/news/Study-reveals-link-between-unemployment-and-crime_17858995.

66 Nicola Satchell, “Survey of Individuals Deprived of Liberty: Caribbean 2016-2019, Jamaica Country Report,” IDB, October 2020, <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Survey-of-Individuals-Deprived-of-Liberty-Caribbean-2016-2019-Jamaica-Country-Report.pdf>.

67 Elizabeth Ward, Kaodi McGaw, and Carl Marsh, “Youth, Peace and Security Case Study, Jamaica,” United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), 2017, www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-04/6.%20CFR_Jamaica%20Case%20Study_Elizabeth%20Ward_0.pdf; Anthony Harriott, “Controlling Violent Crime: Models and Policy Options,” The GraceKennedy Foundation Lecture, 2009, www.gracekennedy.com/images/lecture/GRACE-Lecture-2009.pdf.

68 “About Us: Our Story,” HEART/NSTA, <https://heart-nsta.org/about/>; HEART/NSTA was merged in October 2019 with the National Youth Service and the Apprenticeship Board.

69 “PM Holness Determined to Decrease Unattached Youth Numbers,” The Office of the Prime Minister, October 30, 2019, <https://opm.gov.jm/news/pm-holness-determined-to-decrease-unattached-youth-numbers/>.

70 “Capacity of Skills Training Programme- HEART/NSTA Performance Audit Report,” Auditor’s General Department, September 21, 2020, 19, <https://auditorgeneral.gov.jm/capacity-of-skills-training-programme-heart-national-service-training-agency-nsta/>.

71 Ministry of National Security - Jamaica (@mmsgovjm), “Digital Press Briefing: Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, Minister of National Security,” Twitter post, October 15, 2020, 11:35 AM, <https://twitter.com/mmsgovjm/status/1316779673288802304>.



3

How We Know What Works



The five principles used by the Companion Guide include:

- **Inclusiveness**
- **Credibility**
- **National ownership**
- **Sustainability**
- **Transparency**

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Monitoring and Evaluation Companion Guide provides a template that can be applied to any sort of social intervention, such as those targeting at-risk youth. The UNDAF Companion Guide was drafted to articulate a supportive and integrated approach for UN member states to achieve their 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs).⁷² The five principles used by the Companion Guide include inclusiveness, credibility, national ownership, sustainability, and transparency. These principles are integrated with six mutually reinforcing programming approaches used by the UNDAF, including results-focused programming, capacity development, coherent policy support, and partnerships.⁷³ From the guidance

document, which is comprehensive in its discussion on more elusive points of monitoring and evaluation, there are key elements of an intervention's design that are necessary for knowing "what works."

There are six criteria that should guide the evaluation of any intervention. The first is criteria that revolves around the relevance of the intervention and whether the objectives and design considers the needs of beneficiaries, policy, and development priorities.⁷⁴ Efficiency is the criteria that evaluates the use of the resources, while effectiveness speaks to whether the activities produced results towards achieving the stated objectives of the intervention. The coherence or how compatible an intervention fits into the other interventions being implemented.⁷⁵ The final two criteria speak to impact and sustainability. Impact evaluates

the intended and unintended results of the intervention on individuals and communities. Sustainability assesses whether the impact will continue after the intervention has ended, and whether it can be replicated or adapted.⁷⁶ Evaluation relies significantly on the collection of data for the indicators that were selected to measure the progress of the intervention.⁷⁷

Drawing from the UNDAF guidelines, the very basics of knowing if an intervention "works"—if it achieves its objectives—entails establishing what is the theory of change informing the intervention or the results chain, establishing objectives, getting a baseline, and systematic monitoring, evaluation, and learning that is designed to specifically measure progress towards the objectives, relative to the baseline, or starting point.

⁷² United Nations Development Group, "UNDAF Companion Guidance: Monitoring and Evaluation," 2017, 5, <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-6-Monitoring-And-Evaluation.pdf>.

⁷³ United Nations Development Group, "United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidance," 2017, 13, https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2017-UNDAF_Guidance_01-May-2017.pdf.

⁷⁴ "Evaluation Criteria," OECD, www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

⁷⁵ "Evaluation Criteria," OECD, www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

⁷⁶ UNICEF, "Programme Policy."

⁷⁷ World Health Organization, "Monitoring and Evaluation: Module C5"; Pasanen and Shaxson, "How to Design," 14.

The very basics of knowing if an intervention "works"—if it achieves its objectives—entails establishing what is the theory of change informing the intervention or the results chain, establishing objectives, getting a baseline, and systematic monitoring, evaluation, and learning that is designed to specifically measure progress towards the objectives, relative to the baseline, or starting point.

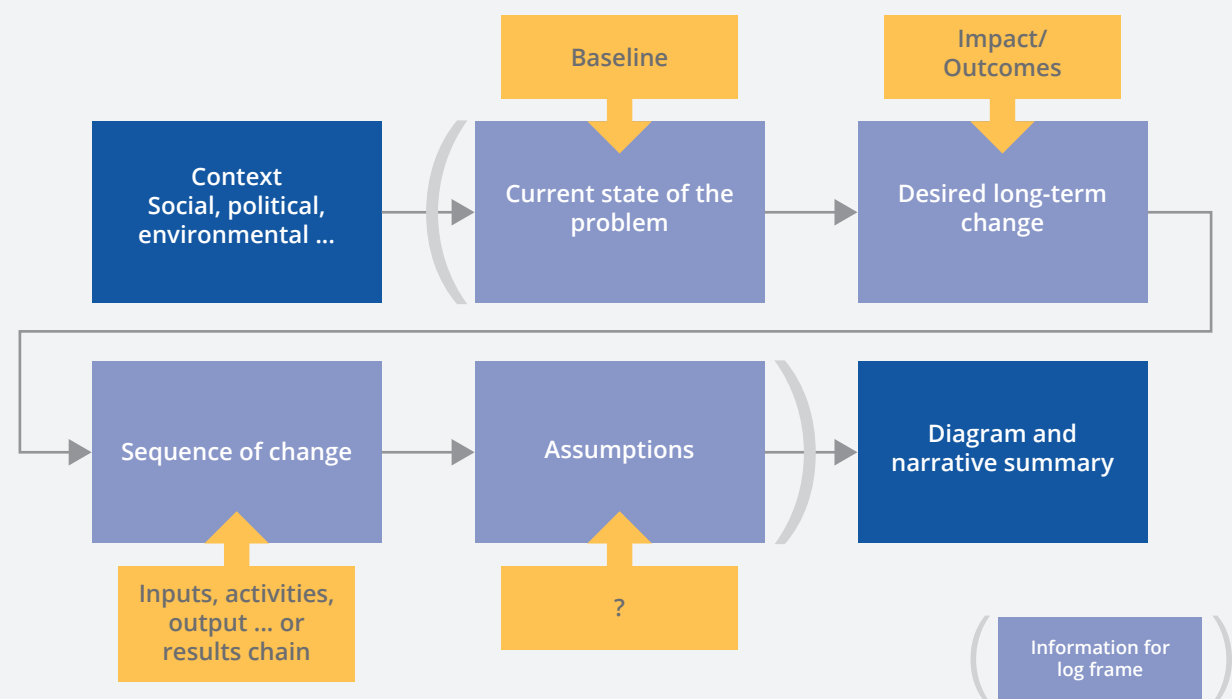
Theory of Change

A theory of change (TOC) is an illustration of how activities are understood to generate results that contribute to achieving the intended outcomes. The identification of the anticipated long-term goals acts as a starting point, and then working back from these, pinpointing outcomes, outputs, actions and inputs that must be in place that is required for the goals to occur.⁷⁸ Working through a theory of change provides for stakeholders to think of “where are we now and where are we going,” in terms of needs and opportunities in the existing situation, and what resources and activities are needed to move from

one point to the next. It focuses on mapping out what has been described as the “missing middle.” The “missing middle” speaks to the process between what a programme’s activities do and how these will lead to the desired objectives being achieved. This is achieved by “first identifying the desired long-term goals and then working back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the goals to occur.”⁷⁹ In short, a theory of change entails critical thinking about the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions intended to support change in their contexts.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual illustration of what a theory of change could look like to intervention stakeholders. The essential components are depicted. First is an assessment of the context and a baseline assessment, “where are we now” to develop measurable indicators. Second is the expected outcomes and impact (where do we want to go and what goals do, we want to achieve). The activities/inputs which include the actors and their respective responsibilities (what do we need to do get there and how do it) help to develop the sequence of change, or what is it that needs to be done to achieve the desired results.

Figure 1: A conceptual illustration for a theory of change



Source: Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly DFID) 2012

78 “What is Theory of Change?,” The Center for Theory of Change, 2019, <https://theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>.
79 Center for Theory of Change, “What is Theory of Change?”

Theory of change is a core concept in any type of intervention, and is particularly germane to anti-violence-type interventions that aim to change behaviour. The design and approach to monitoring and evaluation in Jamaica (and other developing countries) tends to focus on outputs rather than the outcomes; TOC aims to move beyond that approach.⁸⁰ It forces framework designers to move beyond thinking in terms of inputs and outputs and to start thinking plainly how the intervention is expected to work. The explicit design of the framework allows for evaluations to comprehensively question and assess, and even adjust accordingly during the implementation.⁸¹

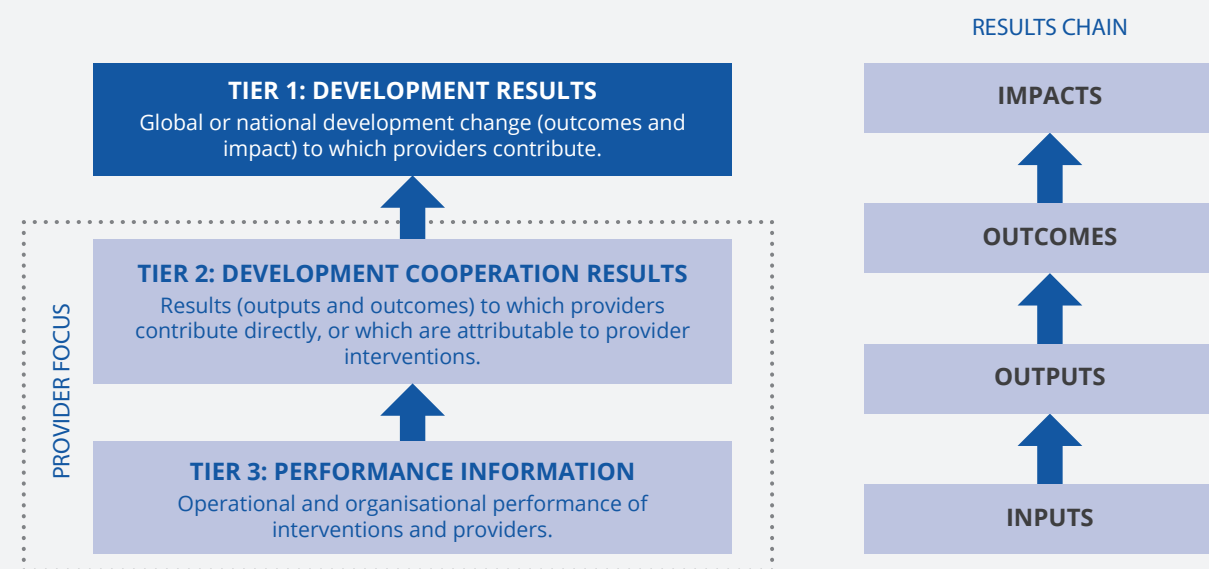
From at least as early as 2009 the

concept of theory of change has been known in Jamaica. In 2009, an evaluation of the Jamaica Inner-City Basic Services for the Poor, a five-year, US\$33 million project, found that there were several gaps in the programme design, one of which was a poorly articulated theory of change.⁸² However, a decade later several MDA and CSO/NGO intervention stakeholders are still grappling with applying this concept to their social interventions. Those planning and implementing interventions are not consistently engaging monitoring and evaluation specialists during the conceptual phase of the interventions, which is when the TOC is most important.⁸³ A 2020 examination of social interventions

related to crime and violence found there was a lack of familiarity with the concept of theory of change among intervention stakeholders in Jamaica, and the benefits of articulating the desired results and then working backward to determine what inputs and activities would be needed to achieve those results.⁸⁴ Thus the concept’s utility is not fully understood, and the know-how to incorporate it is lacking.

Figure two below shows an illustration of a results chain, which is an alternative to a theory of change. A results chain is when stakeholders create internal results approaches at various levels using a basic results chain which links inputs, to activities, outputs and ultimately to outcomes and impact.⁸⁵

Figure 2: A conceptual illustration of a results chain



Source: OECD, 2017⁸⁶

80 Key stakeholder, interview with author, January 26, 2021; Mclean and Lobba, “Assessment,” 14; D.L. Reinholz and T.C. Andrews, “Change Theory and Theory of Change: What’s the Difference Anyway?,” *International Journal of STEM Education* 7, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-020-0202-3>.
81 Isabelle Vogel, “Review of the Use of ‘Theory of Change’ In International Development,” Department for International Development, 2012, 3, www.theoryofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/toco_library/pdf/DFID_ToC_Review_VogelV7.pdf; Patricia Rogers, “Theory of Change,” *Methodological Briefs: Impact Evaluation* No. 2, UNICEF Office of Research, 2014, www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/brief_2_theoryofchange_eng.pdf.
82 Mclean and Lobba, “Assessment,” 40.
83 Key stakeholder, interview with author, January 20, 2021.
84 Key Stakeholder, interview with author, January 19, 2021.
85 Rosie Zwart, “Strengthening the Results Chain: Synthesis of Case Studies of Results-Based Management by Providers,” OECD, (2017), www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/results-strengthening-results-chain-discussion-paper.pdf
86 Zwart (2017).

As with theory of change, there is a visualization of how each link in the chain leads to the next until the objective is achieved – what is needed in each phase until impact.

Baseline Assessments

Baseline assessments provide critical information on the situation the intervention aims to change, establishing a basis for a comparison of the situation before and after programme implementation.⁸⁷ They should be conducted before any activities occur if the data needed does not already exist. The baseline allows for the development of measurable indicators that can then be used as a reference point to know what data needs to be collected to discern whether change is occurring or not.⁸⁸ A baseline assessment should also be used to indicate the scope and type of intervention that is needed, which has to be then supported by robust follow-up data collection to populate the indicators that measure the intervention's progress (or lack thereof).⁸⁹ It provides stakeholders with reference points from which to make inferences as to the effectiveness of the intervention using comparative data. A baseline assessment is a crucial element in planning any intervention and in the subsequent development of a monitoring and evaluation framework.⁹⁰ Baseline data can be either garnered from existing data,

once it is relevant to the intervention, or it should be one of the first activities undertaken by the stakeholders.

Baseline assessments, while logical and perhaps obvious, require capacity and skills that tend to be in short supply in developing countries such as Jamaica. In 2013 the Kenyan government conducted a USAID-funded “Baseline Assessment on Capacity to Undertake Monitoring and Evaluation Functions” of its Civil Registration Department. Several areas were ranked on a scale of zero to ten, with ten being the highest score. The area of human capacity, which included skill sets of individuals and organisations, training capacity and supervision, training and curricula for technical capacity building, among others, was rated the lowest score possible – zero.⁹¹

Capacity, which is defined as “the ability of people, organizations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully,” has two main elements. Human capacity, whereby the persons involved in the intervention design and subsequent execution of the MEL framework, in this instance the creation of a set of baseline indicators, possess the required training and skillsets to carry out the requisite tasks. The second is identifying the infrastructural capacity during the planning stage for the ability to implement and execute the

In 2009, an evaluation of the Jamaica Inner-City Basic Services for the Poor, a five-year, US\$33 million project, found that there were several gaps in the programme design, one of which was a poorly articulated theory of change.



intervention.⁹² The institutional capacity speaks to the consideration of the ability of involved stakeholders and MDAs to fulfill their roles and responsibilities in the intervention.⁹³ Capacity assessments of both team members and involved organisations are important because they can relay information about whether or not the skill set and resources are available to effectively monitor and evaluate a project.

Though Jamaica is not devoid of capacity, it still has challenges in this area, a deficiency that has been acknowledged in several major policy documents. For example, the 2013 final report for CSJP II indicated that there were challenges with not just the institutional capacity of the Ministry of National Security to oversee implementation of CSJP, but also that “report writing, project appraisal, procurement planning, and monitoring and evaluation” were areas where capacity building should be done for the staff of the Programme Executing Unit.⁹⁴ This issue was addressed and saw the implementation of a structured monitoring and evaluation approach in CSJP III. The National Policy on Poverty noted that “learning and capacity building will be critical to bolstering the institutional capacities for poverty reduction efforts.”⁹⁵ Meanwhile the 2012 Youth Situational Analysis indicated that attention needs to be paid to the “capacities of persons working in the systems.”⁹⁶ The expertise is available in Jamaica, but is

oftentimes not actively engaged in either the decision-making process or the programme design process at the outset.⁹⁷ There is also the question as to whether or not decisionmakers will use the existing capacity to make decisions based on the evidence, or if other considerations—political expedience, optics, vested interests—carry more weight.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning, usually referred to as “M and E”, is often used as a catch-all term for assessing interventions. The literature in the 2020s uses the term MEL, reflecting the role of learning in the process, and though in Jamaica “MEL” is seldom used, the use of it in this study is meant to reflect the current literature and practice.⁹⁸ MEL, broadly speaking, implies the entire suite of elements necessary for analysis of an intervention's outcomes, including a theory of change and a baseline measure, and most importantly, using the results to create a knowledge base about what works. In more technical and specific terms, monitoring, evaluation, and learning are distinct but complementary tools of programme implementation.⁹⁹

Monitoring is best understood as the constant internal activity of ensuring that the activities being carried out are on target to achieving the objectives or

87 “What is a Baseline Assessment?” UN Women, Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls, last edited January 3, 2012, www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1323-what-is-a-baseline-assessment.html; “Assessing Community Needs and Resources: Developing Baseline Measures,” Community Tool Box, Center for Community Health and Development, The University of Kansas, <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/developing-baseline-measures/main>.

88 Community Tool Box, “Assessing Community Needs.”

89 Key stakeholder, interview with author, January 26, 2021; Caribbean Development Bank, “Conducting Baseline Studies for Seventeen Vulnerable and Volatile Communities to Support the Government of Jamaica's Community Renewal Programme,” March 2016, www.caribank.org/sites/default/files/publication-resources/Technical-Assistance_-Baseline-Studies-for-17-Vulnerable-and-Volatile-Communities_Jamaica.pdf.

90 Community Tool Box, “Assessing Community Needs”; Isabel Vogel, “ESPA Guide to Working with Theory of Change for Research Projects,” Ecosystem Services for Alleviation of Poverty, 2012 9, www.espa.ac.uk/files/espa/ESPA-Theory-of-Change-Manual-FINAL.pdf.

91 “Report on the Baseline Assessment of Capacity to Undertake Monitoring and Evaluation Functions,” Department of Civil Registration, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, September 2013, www.measurevaluation.org/pima/baseline-assessments/01civilregistrationdepartmentbaselinereport_rev.pdf.

92 Department for Development Policy, “Guidelines for Programme Design.”

93 Department for Development Policy, “Guidelines for Programme Design.”

94 Dr. Joy Moncrieffe, “Final Report for the Final Evaluation of the Citizen Security and Justice Programme II,” 2013.

95 MEGJC, “National Policy on Poverty,” 49.

96 Moncrieffe, “Qualitative Survey,” 121.

97 Key Stakeholder, interview with author, January 19th, 2021.

98 “Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning,” Overseas Development Institute, 2021, <https://odi.org/en/about/our-work/digital-societies/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning/>; “MEL vs M and E: What is the Difference and Why Does it Matter?” Center for International Policy Research and Evaluation, Mathematica, July 14, 2016, www.mathematica.org/events/mel-vs-m-and-e-what-is-the-difference-and-why-does-it-matter.

99 UNICEF, “Programme Policy and Procedures Manual: Programme Operations,” 2003.

intended outcomes of the programme.¹⁰⁰ Multiple forms of monitoring ought to be conducted during the execution of an intervention.¹⁰¹ First is the monitoring which revolves around the activities being carried out to achieve the goals. The second is situation monitoring, also known as contextual monitoring, which is about awareness of the environmental factors that are occurring outside of the intervention, but could potentially have impact. Most of the other types of monitoring, also known collectively as programme monitoring, deals with finances, administrative, and stakeholder compliance.¹⁰² The data collected during the monitoring process informs the subsequent evaluations.

Evaluation is the systematic and deliberate process of data collection and analysis to provide stakeholders with evidenced-based, impartial assessments as to whether the desired outcomes are being or have been achieved.¹⁰³ While monitoring is an internal process, the evaluation of interventions can be either an internal or external process.¹⁰⁴ The process of evaluation is crucial for the “lessons learned” for stakeholders to make informed evidenced-based decisions about policy, strategy and future programmes.¹⁰⁵

The “learning” aspect of MEL is often neglected, with very little attention being paid to the what the data says.¹⁰⁶ Learning

Capacity assessments of both team members and involved organisations are important because they can relay information about whether or not the skill set and resources are available to effectively monitor and evaluate a project.

should take place in two ways. The first is that monitoring has an impact on real-time learning.¹⁰⁷ Real-time learning occurs during the implementation of the intervention through data collection during the monitoring process, and should be supported by technological resources. This use of technology, for example geographical information systems, for collating real time information would be useful for multi-stakeholder collaborations.¹⁰⁸ Properly executed monitoring provides decision-makers with real time information during the implementation that informs them whether the intervention activities are on track to produce the desired outcomes, and to make adjustments as necessary during the implementation. The second is the lessons learned from the experience

of the overall intervention via results that should be garnered from impartial evaluations, lessons which can be used to inform policy and advocacy, and future interventions.¹⁰⁹ The changes made to CSJP III, for example, were as a result of lessons learned from the previous two iterations of the programme, especially those relating to monitoring and evaluation.

The previous section noted the importance of developing a viable theory of change. That TOC ought to inform the development of the MEL framework in the planning stages. In doing so, the knowledge roles and functions of the stakeholders involved in the intervention are identified,¹¹⁰ as are the requisite human and social capacity that will be

needed to execute and support the MEL frameworks. Knowledge roles speak to ensuring that persons involved in the intervention understand their roles and responsibilities. For example, the role of the person responsible for data collection, versus the role of a data analyst, versus a communications coordinator. Clearly defining knowledge roles can help with accountability and to avoid any overlapping of duties and responsibilities, which can undermine the effectiveness of the MEL plan. For example, the CSJP III evaluation noted that the monitoring and evaluation personnel often carried out “compliance responsibilities,”¹¹¹ which hindered the focus on institutional learning and evolution based on shifting environmental factors.¹¹²

Coordination

Jamaica’s 2014 National Security Policy highlighted the challenges associated with coordination and social interventions. Coordination is an important consideration for monitoring and evaluation stakeholders, and is necessary when an intervention adopts a multi-stakeholder, collaborative, or inter-agency approach. It prevents fragmentation, duplication of efforts and can build capacity.¹¹³ The Policy states that “programmes have never been integrated into a coherent strategy, inter-Ministry and inter-agency coordination is usually poor, and there has been a

lack of clarity as to the primary goal of social intervention.”¹¹⁴ Coordination is also necessary when deciding on the knowledge roles and functions of stakeholders who are key to the implementation plan of an intervention. This has been one of the key challenges that has been observed and experienced by several stakeholders in Jamaica.¹¹⁵ The stated attempt to adopt a whole-of-government approach towards the Citizen Security Plan requires high levels of coordination integral to its monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework.

Randomized Controlled Trials

The UNDAF framework does not provide for randomized controlled trials (RCTs), though these are considered by many in the field of interventions to be the gold standard, or the ultimate test of an intervention’s outcomes. Commonly used in testing medical treatments, RCTs are also relevant to social interventions such as those targeting at-risk youth. In a RCT, a randomly assigned control group, usually from the same demographic as the intervention’s target population, does not receive the intervention that is administered to the target group.

Randomized controlled trials are seldom a component of social intervention design and implementation, particularly in developing countries such as Jamaica,

where interventions are carried out in a context of scarce resources. The parent training programme to reduce coercive parenting tactics implemented in CSJP III conducted a RCT. There was a control group and a treatment group. The former did not receive the parenting training, with the goal of determining whether the intervention had a measurable impact.¹¹⁶ The project report stated that there was a decrease in the use of coercive parenting tactics in the treatment group when compared to the control group, suggesting that the RCT did provide evidence that the intervention “worked.” However, the other conclusions stated in the report—that the intervention “demonstrated that parents are willing to change with the right help given,” that there was “improvement in parental performance as it relates to family relationships, and parental consistency,” and that the intervention “has proven that a coordinated effort with a standardized curriculum and activities is what worked”—were not derived from the RCT, but from the qualitative appraisal of the programme from its participants.¹¹⁷ Thus even where RCTs are used, they do not appear to be fully exploiting their explanatory value.

Randomized controlled trials can have value but are not without challenges. Among the arguments against them is that the approach withholds potentially beneficial resources to the target

100 United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction, “Monitoring and Evaluation Framework,” n.d., www.preventionweb.net/files/49324_unisdrmeframeworkver1.0.pdf; UNICEF, “Programme Policy.”

101 Nigel Simster, “Monitoring,” International NGO Training and Research Centre, 2017, www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Monitoring.pdf.

102 Simster, “Monitoring.”

103 UNISDR, “Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.”

104 UNDG, “UNDAF Companion Guidance.”

105 UNDG, “UNDAF Companion Guidance,” 14.

106 Key Stakeholder, interview with author, January 26, 2021.

107 UNDG, “UNDAF Companion Guidance,” 4.

108 UNDG, “UNDAF Companion Guidance,” 4.

109 Tiina Pasanen and Louise Shaxson, “How to Design a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for a Policy Research Project,” Overseas Development Institute, January 2016, 11, <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/10259.pdf>.

110 Pasanen and Shaxson, “How to Design,” 10.

111 There was no explanation as to what exactly was meant by compliance responsibilities, though compliance refers to ensuring that an organization is fulfilling its legal or regulatory requirements, industry standards, licensing terms, contractual commitments, or other formal obligations. Stephen D. Gantz, “The Basics of IT Audit: Purposes, Processes, and Practical Information,” 2013, www.elsevier.com/books/the-basics-of-it-audit/gantz/978-0-12-417159-6.

112 David Rees and Andres Rengifo, “CSJP III Final Evaluation: Final Presentation,” Ernest and Young, April 16, 2021.

113 “Policy Framework for the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Systems,” The Presidency, Republic of South Africa, 2007, www.dpme.gov.za/publications/Policy%20Framework/Policy%20Framework%20for%20the%20GWME%20system.pdf

114 “A New Approach: National Security Policy for Jamaica. Towards a Secure and Prosperous Nation,” Government of Jamaica, 2014, <https://cabinet.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NATSEC-March-25-2014-1-1.pdf>.

115 Ministry of National Security Personnel, January 22, 2021; Kellie-Ann Magnus, “Guns Out: The Splintering of Jamaica’s Violent Gangs,” Caribbean Policy Research Institute, March 10, 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXjAelbKFZI&t=262s.

116 Melva Spence and Denise Simpson, “Disrupting the Transmission of Violence: The Citizen Security and Justice Programme III parenting Education Model,” Citizen Security and Justice Programme III, Ministry of National Security, 2020, 31, <https://mns.gov.jm/sites/default/files/csjp/Disrupting%20the%20Transmission%20of%20Violence/mobile/index.html>.

117 Spence and Simpson, “Disrupting,” 40.

Properly executed monitoring provides decision-makers with real time information during the implementation that informs them whether the intervention activities are on track to produce the desired outcomes, and to make adjustments as necessary during the implementation.

populations. If such an approach is taken when community interventions are involved, and it means excluding a community that is vulnerable and in need of the intervention, it could be argued that they are being unfairly excluded.¹¹⁸ Randomized controlled trials are also difficult, expensive, and time-consuming, especially if implemented on a large scale,¹¹⁹ and are seldom a part of anti-violence interventions in Jamaica; only two of the ten programmes examined by this report used RCTs.

The concept and practice of monitoring, evaluation, and learning are gaining traction in Jamaica, but too slowly.¹²⁰ Monitoring and evaluation have become more prominent in large part because

international donor partners mandate it as a condition for funding.¹²¹ However, the field of MEL is still considered very abstract, and even obscure, which has hindered its embeddedness in intervention policies and practices, and many stakeholders and policymakers are still unable to relate to it.¹²²

Ten Interventions Targeting At-Risk Youth

Our sample of ten interventions is defined by their target group of at-risk youth. Though the interventions are varied, with different objectives, an assortment of modalities, and widely ranging scopes,

their common goal is to mitigate the disadvantages faced by at-risk youth, with a view to preventing them from becoming unattached, and, ultimately, a danger to themselves and a scourge on society.

GOJ FUNDED AND IMPLEMENTED

Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment

The government of Jamaica launched the Housing, Opportunity, Production, and Employment (HOPE) initiative in May 2017 with a mandate to “provide educational and job opportunities for young people and... provide an avenue for the development of fully rounded individuals, who have the social,

academic, and technical skills to become productive members of the society.”¹²³ The programme was established to engage persons between the ages of 18 to 24 years old who were not employed or in a training programme. Most participants are recruited through HEART, however, teams may be dispatched into volatile communities to actively recruit youths who would benefit from the intervention. Some participants are also referred to the programme by community leaders, Members of Parliament, and police.¹²⁴ Certification for HOPE participants is issued by HEART/NSTA, and the programmes are to be merged.¹²⁵ HOPE is mostly government-funded, but also has several initiatives funded by international donor agencies.

We Transform

The We Transform Youth Empowerment Programme was launched in 2017 by the Ministry of National Security (MNS) and is stated as a youth-centred approach to rehabilitation.¹²⁶ The main recipients of this programme are children aged to 12-17 years old who are within the care and supervision of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). The programme has five stated objectives, two of which are contributing to the “reduction in youth offending/reoffending and by extension crime and violence,” and to “build self-esteem, sense of purpose, and resilience; as well

as promote good values and attitudes among the children.” The programme operates through “a multi-stakeholder collaborative approach,” implemented in two phases, encompassing both rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. (A multi-stakeholder collaborative approach means that individuals and/or organisations who share a common purpose collectively participate in a process that is meant to produce mutually beneficial outcomes.)¹²⁷ Phase one engages youth in health and wellness activities, life skills, and visual and performing arts. Phase two includes a mentorship programme, internship/job placement, vocational education, and grants to support educational and entrepreneurial pursuits. The We Transform programme is government-run and funded, but also permits for funding from and collaboration with donors.

Truck Driving Simulator

The Truck Driving Simulator was launched in January 2020 with the aim to “provide an honest productive alternative” for 30 “marginalized young men, and facilitate behavioural change, while generating socio-economic opportunities.”¹²⁸ The stated objective of the five-month programme is to prepare the participants to apply technical skills and knowledge to drive articulated and combination units, including

trailers, trucks, buses, and delivery and commercial vehicles. Participants, who all reside in communities in St. James, were selected using a risk assessment tool that was developed under the Citizen Security and Justice programme. The programme is facilitated by an inter-agency collaboration between the Jamaica Defense Force’s Caribbean Military Academy, the Ministry of National Security, HEART/NSTA, and the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU). At the completion of the intervention participants “will receive certification from the CMU and be NVQJ Level 3 qualification in commercial driving operations.” The programme costs an estimated J\$20 million, and is funded and implemented by the Jamaican government.¹²⁹

Jamaica Combined Cadet Force

The Jamaica Combined Cadet Force (JCCF) was a youth organization that was formed in 1943 and originally operated under the Ministry of Education, but then was transferred to the Ministry of Defence in the 1960s.¹³⁰ It now falls under the purview of the Ministry of National Security. In 2000 the Commandant of the Jamaica Combined Cadet Forces was given a mandate by the GOJ that the organization should increase its numbers to 10,000 members. This was based on the premise that those youth who are involved in violence and participation

118 David Resnick, “Randomised Control Trials in Environmental Health Research: Ethical Issues,” *Journal Environmental Health* 70, no. 6 (2008): 28-30, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2653276/; Helen Roberts, et.al., “Randomised Controlled Trials of Social Interventions: Barriers and Facilitators in an International Context,” London School of Economics and Political Science, 2008, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/2705192.pdf>.

119 Wilson, “Intuition is not Evidence”; Judith Stephenson and John Imrie, “Why Do We Need Randomised Controlled Trials to Assess Behavioural Interventions?” *BMJ* 316, no. 7131 (1998): 611-613, doi: 10.1136/bmj.316.7131.61.

120 Key stakeholder, interview with author, January 26, 2021.

121 Key stakeholder, January 26, 2021.

122 Key stakeholder, January 26, 2021; Ministry of National Security Personnel, January 22, 2021.

123 Lieutenant Colonel Martin Rickman, National Coordinator HOPE, communication with author, April 7, 2021.

124 Lieutenant Colonel Martin Rickman, National Coordinator HOPE, communication with author, May 3, 2021.

125 HOPE is set to be merged with HEART/NSTA as an ongoing effort to streamline government entities that are carrying out similar activities. In this instance it is to better attempt to capture and engage youths deemed to be not employed, educated, or in a training programme.

126 Information about this programme was garnered from the Ministry of National Security, through communication with the author, April 8, 2020.

127 Fred Krawchuk, “Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: How Government, Business, and Non-Governmental Leaders Transform Complex Challenges into New Possibilities,” One Earth Future Foundation, 2013, www.oefresearch.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/msc-digital-final-r.pdf.

128 Nicketa Sterling, “Thirty At-risk Youth in St. James Enroll in CMA Truck Driver Simulator Training Programme,” Jamaica Information Service, February 6, 2021, <https://jis.gov.jm/thirty-at-risk-youth-in-st-james-enroll-in-cma-truck-driver-simulator-training-programme/>.

129 Sterling, “Thirty At-risk.”

130 Jamaica Combined Cadet Force, communication with author, July 9, 2019. This cadet force differs from “boot camps” which are interventions that purport to redirect at-risk youth, using military-type discipline and training. In Jamaica, JCCF participants enter voluntarily and willingly, while boot camp participants are usually forced to do the programme as part of their rehabilitation after coming into conflict with the law.

in criminal gangs “lack discipline.”¹³¹ In 2018, there were 2,741 cadets and had established battalion headquarters in all 14 parishes, a move that was meant to increase the membership numbers.¹³² That year the organisation was given a further mandate to “establish a cadet unit in every secondary school in order to instill discipline and pro-social values,”¹³³ and to increase the number to 5,000 within five years. As at August 2020 the programme had a cohort of 4,654 cadets and 227 adults.¹³⁴ The intervention accepts children, 13 years and older in high school, and adults, 18 years and older with certain academic qualifications. The adults, who go through a shorter training period, then mentor the children. The JCCF currently has units in 91 high schools and seven tertiary institutions; the aim is to have cadet units in 185 of Jamaica’s education institutions.¹³⁵ The programme also runs a summer camp for cadets in an effort to engage them year-round. The participants are given three meals a day, medical check-ups, education grants, and counselling if referred by the commanding officer or requested by parents. The programme had a budget of J\$40 million for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, and is funded and implemented by the GOJ.

GOJ IMPLEMENTED, DONOR FUNDED

Partnership Towards Youth Crime and Violence Prevention

The Partnership Towards Youth Crime and Violence Prevention initiative utilizes

a “case management approach to the design, implementation, and monitoring of preventative interventions targeting at-risk youth.”¹³⁶ It was launched in 2020 in the communities of Flankers and Salt Spring, St. James, under the rubric of the Planning Institute of Jamaica’s (PIOJ) Community Renewal Programme.¹³⁷ The Community Renewal Programme was established in 2011 as a mechanism for coordinating and enhancing programme delivery in communities identified as being volatile and vulnerable, in alignment with Vision 2030 (Jamaica National Development Plan). The aim is to “achieve community transformation and people’s empowerment in the targeted spaces through greater efficiency and more effective targeting in programme design and delivery to ensure coherence and efficiency in programme delivery. That is, coordination to improve citizen security through the provision of resources for Jamaica’s most volatile and vulnerable communities.”

The initiative is supposed to run for 12 months in the communities of Flankers and Salt Spring, and will target 80 medium- and high-risk youth, age 14 to 29 years. The intervention will include cognitive behaviour therapy, life skills training, and multiservice training. The “multidimensional and mutually reinforcing” holistic scope of interventions should “reduce the risk factors while strengthening the protective factors,” and includes “therapy sessions for the families” of the participants. The programme is government-run but

donor-funded, by USAID through FHI 360 Local Partner Development at a cost of J\$38 million.

NGO IMPLEMENTED WITH DONOR FUNDS

Child Resiliency Programme

The Child Resiliency Programme’s (CRP) objective is to “foster the development of resilient attributes and life skills training via sports and cultural arts.”¹³⁸ The target population is children who are considered high risk, who are from violent environments, and who display maladaptive behaviour. CRP began as an outreach programme of the Hope United Church in Kingston in 2006, and sought to meet the social, cognitive, physical, vocational, and moral well-being of its pre-adolescent participants. In 2014, it started operating as a Violence Prevention Alliance project and expanded into more communities. There were four CRPs by 2017, two in Kingston, one in Falmouth, Trelawny, and one in Montego Bay, St. James. Teachers and counsellors from feeder schools refer students who are exposed to home or community violence. Some of the referral criteria include displaying violent behaviour, a family history of incarceration and gangs, and exposure to abuse, along with questionable academic performance. The CRP aims to establish a collaborative network between schools, churches, community organisations, families, and health services. Since September 2020, and because of restrictions caused by COVID-19, only the Kingston Boys

Town centre has been operating. There are currently 60 “at-risk” children and 30 parents. The programme currently costs US \$1,200 per child for each academic year, which the implementers consider limited resources, and which prevents them from expanding the programme to other children in need.¹³⁹ The programme is donor-funded and NGO-implemented.

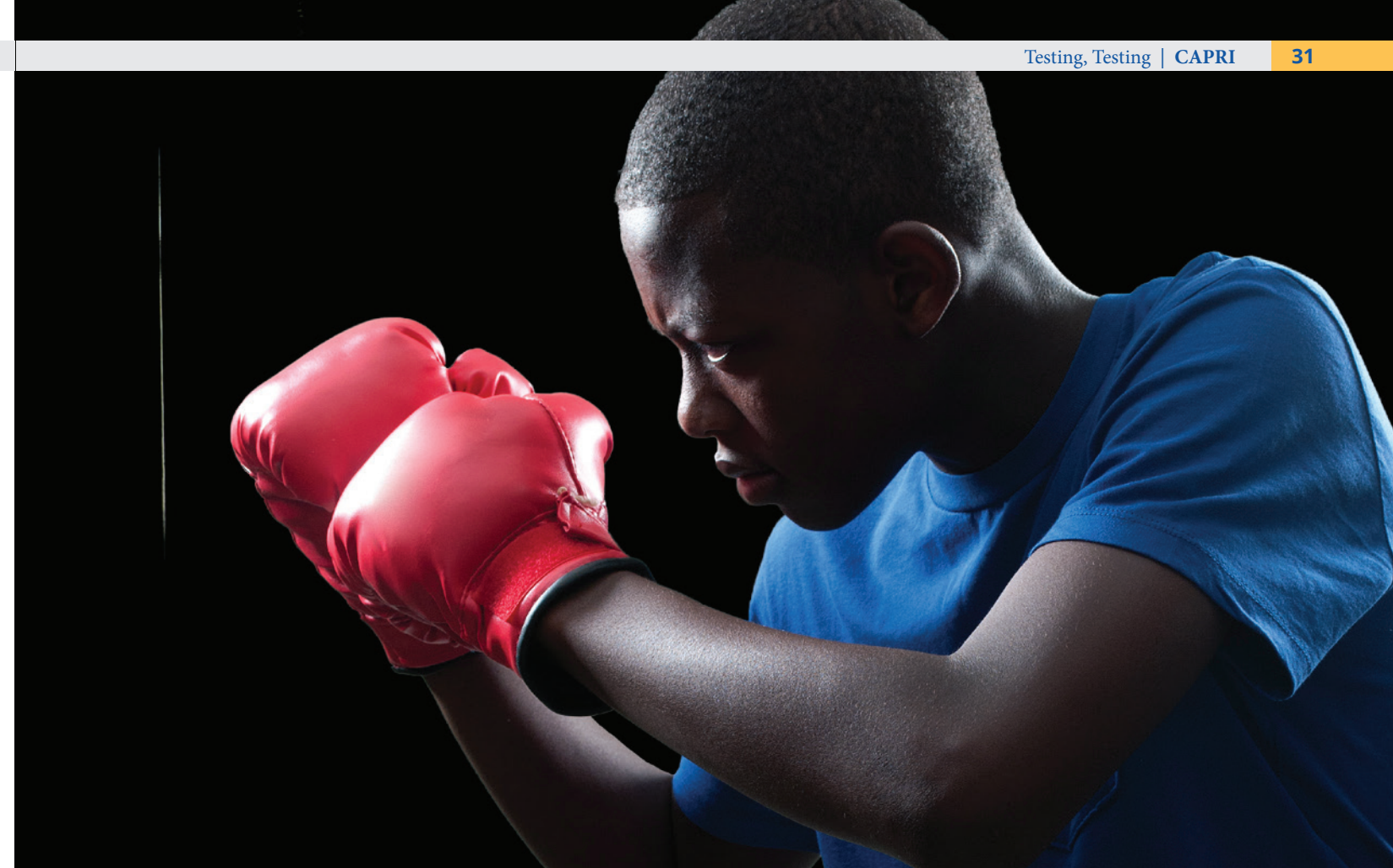
Fight for Peace

Fight for Peace (FFP) is a global non-governmental organisation that originated in the favelas of Brazil.¹⁴⁰ It runs two Academies, in London and Rio de Janeiro and Collectives in London and Kingston. It serves more than 160 partner organizations globally through its Alliance. The UP Unity & Peace

¹³⁹ Dr. Kim Scott, Programme Director Child Resiliency Programme, communication with author, May 2, 2021.

¹⁴⁰ “Fight for Peace in Jamaica: Background and Summary,” Fight for Peace, n.d., <https://fightforpeace.net/fight-peace-jamaica/>; “Alliance,” Fight for Peace, n.d., <http://fightforpeace.net/fight-peace-alliance/>; “Documenting Change,” Fight for Peace, n.d., <https://fightforpeace.net/our-results/>.

¹⁴¹ Fight for Peace, “Unity and Peace.”



Programme is one of the FFP Collectives. It is a collaborative programme that brings together local partners to work towards a shared agenda - helping young people realize their potential and promoting peace in communities challenged by high levels of violence. The programme began in 2016, with Jamaican organizations who were part of the FFP Global Alliance; all were working with young people in communities affected by violence and had expertise in different areas of the FFP methodology, which is comprised of boxing and martial arts, education, employability, youth leadership, and psycho-social support. Community-based organisations, other sport federations, NGOs, and government agencies join in hosting,

delivering, and facilitating programmes in the network. The organisation focuses heavily on psycho-social support to address the mental and emotional trauma that youths might experience from living in communities with high levels of violence. The UP Unity and Peace Programme operates in downtown Kingston, including Denham Town, Trench Town, Fletchers Land and Parade Gardens. FFP plays the role of the “backbone organization,” coordinating the over 40 partners carrying out activities. Since 2014 FFP has had some 2,300-youth participating in its interventions.¹⁴¹

FFP states that its approach is based on and uses the “five core elements of the Collective Impact Model: 1) A Shared

¹³¹ “Jamaica Combined Cadet Force – Logical Framework,” Ministry of National Security, communication with author, July 9, 2020.

¹³² Jamaica Combined Cadet Force Information Booklet.

¹³³ Okoye Henry, “Cadet Corps to be Established in All High Schools,” Jamaica Information Service, November 9, 2019, <https://jis.gov.jm/cadet-corps-to-be-established-in-all-high-schools/>.

¹³⁴ Latonya Linton, “More Cadet Units to be Established in Schools,” Jamaica Information Service, May 18, 2018, <https://jis.gov.jm/more-cadet-units-to-be-established-in-schools/>; Jamaica Combined Cadet Force, communication with author, May 3, 2021.

¹³⁵ Jamaica Combined Cadet Force Information Booklet.

¹³⁶ Charles Clayton, Programme Director Community Renewal Programme, communication with author, April 9, 2021.

¹³⁷ “Partnership Towards Youth Crime and Violence Prevention,” FHI 360, communication with author, March 5, 2021.

¹³⁸ Dr. Kim Scott, Programme Director Child Resiliency Programme, communication with author, April 9, 2021.

Agenda, 2) Shared Theory of Change, 3) Shared Metrics, 4) Continuous Communication, 5) A Backbone Organisation.” Overall, the organisation has sensitized and trained over 350 people in monitoring and evaluation to ensure that both qualitative and quantitative data is collected for evaluation. Fight for Peace is supported in Jamaica by international development partners and donors.

Local Partner Development: Core Partners

Local Partner Development: Core Partners is a crime prevention initiative targeting youth with high risk factors for crime and violence.¹⁴² It was launched in November 2020 in collaboration with FHI 360, Local Partner Development, and three Jamaican NGO partners: Peace Management Initiative (PMI), MultiCare Youth Foundation (MYF), and the Violence Prevention Alliance. USAID is providing full financial support for the project at J\$156 million.¹⁴³ The project was the product of a co-creation/collaborative action planning process in which the three partners co-deliver a “holistic suite of services designed to reduce the risk factors” of the project’s target population. The three partners are already delivering secondary and tertiary crime prevention initiatives on a national scale and as such, one of the project objectives is for the partnership to align and coordinate activities under the project, in order to deliver a more complete service. The core partners also commit, in this project, to partner with other community-based organisations (CBOs) to co-create and jointly implement localized versions of

their core interventions. Implementation activities will also include national partners (such as MYF who will work with Department of Correctional Services to reach incarcerated youth) providing technical support to other CBOs and MDAs to deliver services.

Each intervention addresses different vulnerabilities faced by at-risk youth, though all are in the general ambit of behaviour modification and re-socialization. The MYF intervention – “YUTE for Tomorrow” - seeks to “improve the human and social capacity of youth in conflict with the law, provide opportunities for positive youth development and improvement of protective factors, and expose at-risk youth to pro-social tools and services to strengthen their personal competencies and bring about positive behaviour modification.”¹⁴⁴ Those participants that need cognitive behavioural therapy will be referred to the Peace Management Initiative (PMI). The PMI intervention, “Gang Demobilization Transition Programme for High-Risk Youth” targets youth 14 to 29 years old who are either on the verge of or already involved in gang activity. PMI will work with the other two partners to “provide coordinated treatment services” for at least 160 high-risk youth from Whitfield and Trench Town and one other community to be determined, for a two-year period.¹⁴⁵ The Violence Prevention Alliance’s “Community Advancement to Peace Project” (CAPP) targets youth aged 10 to 29 years old who have been treated for violence-related injuries at the Kingston Public and Bustamante Children’s

Hospitals, with a view to identifying their needs and providing them with the necessary support, whether through referral to another entity, or the provision of mental health and psycho-social services by the project’s social workers. Remedial interventions include life skills and psychosocial activities, literacy and numeracy, parenting and family strengthening, and counselling for intimate partner violence.

COMBINATION OF NGO, GOJ, AND DONOR-FUNDING

Irie Classroom Toolbox

The Irie Classroom Toolbox is a teacher-training programme that aims to prevent the early development of antisocial behaviour in young children, and to prevent violence against children by early childhood educators.^{146, 147} The programme trains early childhood practitioners in classroom behaviour management and the promotion of child social-emotional competence. It was borne out of the belief that preventing violence in early childhood is a core component of the primary prevention of violence, and thus while it strictly speaking does not target at-risk youth, it could be said to target children who are at risk of becoming at-risk youth.¹⁴⁸

The Irie Classroom Toolbox was developed by integrating the common core components of evidence-based, classroom behaviour management programmes with formative research and extensive piloting with Jamaican early childhood teachers. The programme provides guidance on

creating an emotionally supportive classroom environment, preventing and managing child behaviour problems, teaching social and emotional skills to children, and individual and class-wide behaviour planning. The Toolbox is delivered through a combination of training workshops and in-class support sessions.¹⁴⁹

The programme has partnered with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information through the Early Childhood Commission, and UNICEF Jamaica, and is to be implemented among all early childhood teachers. One hundred basic/infant schools (approximately 500 teachers) have been trained in the Irie Classroom Toolbox reaching approximately 10,000 children aged 3-6 years each year. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information used a one-day training from the Irie Classroom Toolbox for a national training initiative and all primary school teachers of children in grades one to three participated in that training (approximately 850 schools, 5,100 teachers). Over 120,000 primary school students aged 6-8 years have been

exposed to teachers trained through this initiative.¹⁵⁰

A training kit is required to conduct the training – this is a one-time cost per trainer of US\$150. The Irie Toolbox Team have provided 60 training kits to the Early Childhood Commission, which is sufficient for all of their officers to implement the training (thus reaching all early childhood teachers). The programme is now government-implemented and funded. The creators of the Irie Classroom Toolbox have, using the Irie Classroom Toolbox as proof of concept, developed a home-based equivalent violence prevention programme targeting parents of children aged two to six years.¹⁵¹

Behaviour Modification Intervention

The Behaviour Modification Intervention was implemented under the Poverty Reduction Programme, and was a multi-partner, multi-project intervention that comprised of several components to address different target populations.¹⁵² The Jamaica Social Investment Fund,

the implementing agency of the Poverty Reduction Programme IV, and one of the Government of Jamaica’s main agencies tasked with effecting social change, was responsible for overseeing the project. Component one of the project which was a Community Behaviour Modification (CBM) programme is the component being examined by this report. It had a stated objective “to reduce deviant behaviour among at-risk youth through funding of community-level interventions implemented by civil society organisations.” The five projects in component one was implemented by four partner organisations: Family and Parenting Centre Ltd, Multi-Care Youth Foundation, UWI Social Work Training and Research Centre, and Women’s Media Watch-Jamaica. While the partners each had their own target cohort, the component targeted both children and youth at-risk ranging from 9 to 25 years of age, from 65 eligible communities across the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew, St. Catherine, Clarendon, and St. James. The Poverty Reduction Programme is financed by the Government of Jamaica and the European Union.

142 Machel Stewart, Programme Specialist, Youth Crime and Violence Prevention, communication with author, April 19, 2021.

143 “USAID Awards Over \$156m.”

144 “Attachment A. Program Description,” FHI 360 representative, communication with author, March 5, 2021.

145 Whitfield and Trench Town are two poor, volatile communities in Kingston.

146 Dr. Helen Baker-Henningham, Lead Researcher/Conceptualizer Irie Classroom, communication with author, April 19, 2021.

147 Helen Baker-Henningham. 2018. The Irie Classroom Toolbox: Developing a Violence-Prevention, Preschool Teacher Training Program Using Evidence, Theory, and Practice. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1419: 179-200. Doi: 10.1111/nyas.13713.

148 Baker-Henningham. 2018.

149 Helen Baker-Henningham, Yakeisha Scott, Marsha Bowers, and Taja Francis. "Evaluation of a violence-prevention programme with Jamaican primary school teachers: A cluster randomised trial." *International journal of environmental research and public health* 16, no. 15 (2019): 2797.

150 Dr. Helen Baker-Henningham, Lead Researcher/Conceptualizer Irie Classroom, communication with author, April 19, 2021.

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4 Analysis of Interventions



Of the 10 interventions for which MEL frameworks were requested for this study,

- 4** shared their framework documents;
- 1** had no framework at all

Jamaica's attempts to measure the efficacy of social interventions to reduce violence have been hindered by weaknesses related to monitoring, evaluation, and learning. These hurdles have affected both government and non-government efforts. Other impediments have included lack of coordination between implementing entities, accessibility of programme documents, and sustainability. But these are known problems, and have been acknowledged several times at least since the mid-2000s. How far has Jamaica progressed in applying these tools to its recent interventions?

Using the principles established in the preceding chapter, the study examined each intervention's framework with a view to assessing whether the intervention has the basic components necessary for discerning its outcomes. The examination of each intervention sought to identify a theory of change or results chain, the articulation of goals and objectives, whether a baseline measure was done, the identification of inputs and outputs, and means of measuring outcomes and impacts. As far



as possible the data collection processes and coordination mechanisms were also examined; the former has an integral role in the monitoring process, while the latter is important for implementation when multiple actors are involved.

Of the ten interventions for which MEL frameworks were requested for this study, four shared their framework documents; one had no framework at all; one had no framework but stated it would occasionally use the framework

of some international donor partners; three shared evaluation reports of their intervention containing monitoring and evaluation details but not an actual framework, and the final did not have a framework designed specifically for the intervention but was "incorporated into a national framework." For one of the interventions without a framework, the principals stated that they had been trying to put the capacity and infrastructure in place for MEL for at least two years but had been unsuccessful.

Jamaica's attempts to measure the efficacy of social interventions to reduce violence have been hindered by weaknesses related to monitoring, evaluation, and learning. These hurdles have affected both government and non-government efforts.

Table 1: The basics for knowing what works

Intervention	Is there a framework	Theory of Change/ Results Chain	Baseline Assessment	Data Collection	How information was obtained
HOPE	✗	✓	✗	✗	Interview
We Transform	✓	✓	✓	✓	Project Documents
Truck Driving Simulator	✗	✗	✓	✗	Email communication
Jamaica Combined Cadet Force	✓	✗	✗	✗	Project Documents/ Email Communication
Partnership Towards Youth Crime and Violence Prevention	✓	✓	✓	✓	Project Documents
Child Resiliency Programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	Evaluation Report/ Email communication
Fight for Peace	✓	✓	✓	✓	Evaluation Report/ Email Communication
Local Partner Development: Core Partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	Project Documents
Irie Classroom Toolbox	✓	✓	✓	✓	Academic articles/ email communication
Behaviour Modification Intervention	✓	✓	✓	✓	Project Documents
Total	8	7	8	8	

Table 1 provides insight into an analysis of the basic components of the selected programmes as well as how the information for the analysis was attained from the implementing stakeholders. As the table shows, six of the programmes checked all the boxes for having the basic components of assessing the intervention's outcomes.

Nine of the ten programmes were conceptualized using a theory of change/ results chain. Of that eight, only one provided a clearly articulated TOC, not only explaining the results chain between the activities and the outcomes, but also the illustration of the flow of the project, as well as the role of each primary stakeholder involved. As was pointed out, TOC remains an elusive concept within the MEL field in Jamaica, and this survey of interventions bears witness to that.

Available documents and information were examined for those programmes that did not have an MEL framework, for the rationale and reasoning behind the implementation of the intervention. For the Truck Driving Simulator programme, the reasoning gleaned was that at-risk youth needed to be engaged, trained, and certified in a specialist skillset that was deemed both locally and globally marketable. Of the training areas explored, heavy duty equipment handling was identified as, in the stakeholders' view, a practical and sustainable model to best treat with the target population.¹⁵³ As far as could be ascertained from the information available, there was no proof of concept, nor did any evidence inform this view,

beyond the stakeholders' opinions (and, undoubtedly, experience). The reasoning behind HOPE is that "no one is left behind," and that all unattached youth must be engaged, including those who do not meet the requirements to be admitted into other post-high school programmes. The assumption is that to reduce the presence and participation of at-risk youths in gangs, social interventions which aim to provide youth with skills to participate in the formal economy ought not to exclude those who are not qualified to be admitted elsewhere.¹⁵⁴ While both of the premises underlying these two interventions ostensibly "make sense," there are several examples of other similar endeavours where, when measured, the interventions were not only ineffective, but have inadvertently caused harm.¹⁵⁵ There were no specifics available as to how outcomes were to be measured for either of these two programmes.

Baseline assessments should have been done prior to the implementation of each programme if there was no existing data, against which change can be measured as the intervention progresses. Eight of the interventions indicated the use of baseline assessments in their frameworks, and two did not. Four of the eight (both governmental and non-governmental) used an individual risk assessment form that was developed by the CSJP.¹⁵⁶ This streamlined assessment tool is used for the case management of individuals, and assigns them a category of high, medium, or low risk. The high risk and medium risk individuals are those that

are usually the targeted population of the interventions. The fact that this tool is being used across interventions is a positive step indicating more and better coordination.

These baseline assessments can also be used to decide what data should be collected, and even the type of data collection process to be used. Of the ten interventions, seven had a data collection process. Knowing "what works" depends on the ability to measure the intervention, and the ability to measure is dependent upon capturing the data during the execution of the intervention. Frameworks should be designed with the right indicators, from baseline to targets, that can be used to measure the outputs and outcomes of the intervention.

Though collaboration is not an explicit element of the MEL framework against which these interventions were examined, the project documents and other information that were accessed did allow for some interrogation of the extent to which this was present in the programme design. Collaboration is important because it gives the intervention a higher probability of effectiveness and efficiency once knowledge roles have been clearly outlined. There are two important benefits of collaboration. First is that it can allow a collective group of stakeholders to benefit from the capacities of its partners; this includes knowledge sharing of lessons already learned. Secondly, collaborating can provide a more cost-effective and resourceful approach to impact hard-

¹⁵³ Ministry of National Security, communication with author, May 12, 2021.

¹⁵⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Martin Rickman, communication with author, May 03, 2021.

¹⁵⁵ Wilson and Juarez, "Intuition is not Evidence."

¹⁵⁶ During CSJP III, the Jamaican Risk Assessment: Adult Violence (JRA:AV) and the Jamaican Risk Assessment: Youth Violence (JRA:YV) were risk assessment instruments administered to identify the risk level of committing a violent act/perpetrating violence, and were developed for case management purposes. The instruments were designed as a part of the CSJP III's strategic shift to have more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of interventions and delivery of services.

to-reach populations. In the Jamaican context, where there may be several interventions running parallel to each other, in the same vulnerable community, with the same target group, there is often overlap, target participant burnout, duplication of efforts, and conflicting objectives.

Seven of the ten interventions indicated explicit collaboration in their programme documents, for some of the seven it was a cornerstone of the intervention. Two of the interventions, which are guided by FHI 360, emphasize a collaborating, learning, and adapting approach, which means that the projects are “structured to promote learning and adapting by: creating a learning environment and inclusive team; fostering open dialogue; responsiveness to feedback; and, willingness to work with others.”¹⁵⁷ This is more so emphasized with one of the two interventions where the grantees were required to adjust their project designs to collaborate more with each other, to take advantage of the strengths of each intervention, and ensure a more holistic approach. FHI 360 also has a virtual dashboard where the core partners are required to enter data regularly so that the programme progress can be monitored.

Programmes that are implemented by the government appear to have the weakest approach to monitoring and evaluation,

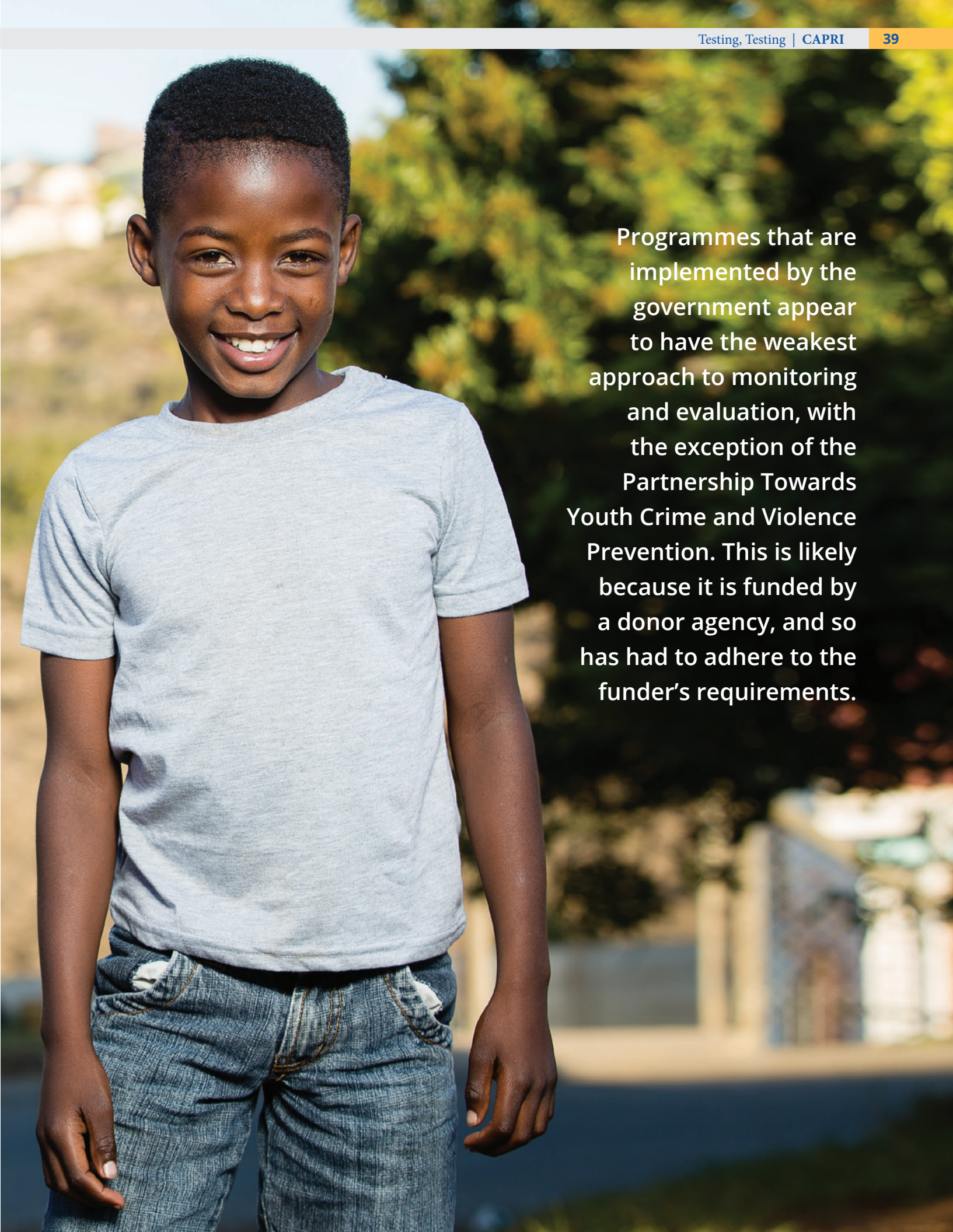
with the exception of the Partnership Towards Youth Crime and Violence Prevention. This is likely because it is funded by a donor agency, and so has had to adhere to the funder’s requirements. This apparent weakness might speak to a capacity challenge, as was highlighted earlier, though ascertaining the specifics of the capacity deficit are beyond the scope of this study. With specific reference to HOPE which does not have a MEL framework: given the Auditor General’s finding that HEART suffered a severe monitoring and evaluation deficit, if there is to be a merger of HOPE and HEART, it is imperative that a suitable MEL framework be integrated into the merged entity, and the capacity provided to implement it.

Transparency and accountability are also factors that might contribute to explaining why GoJ interventions tend to be weak on monitoring and evaluation. NGOs, which rely heavily on donor funding, are required to be more accountable and transparent, even more so when the donor funding comes from international agencies. Coherent MEL necessarily brings transparency and accountability as programme activities are scrutinized for their efficacy and results.

The reluctance to be transparent about an intervention’s monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework may be for

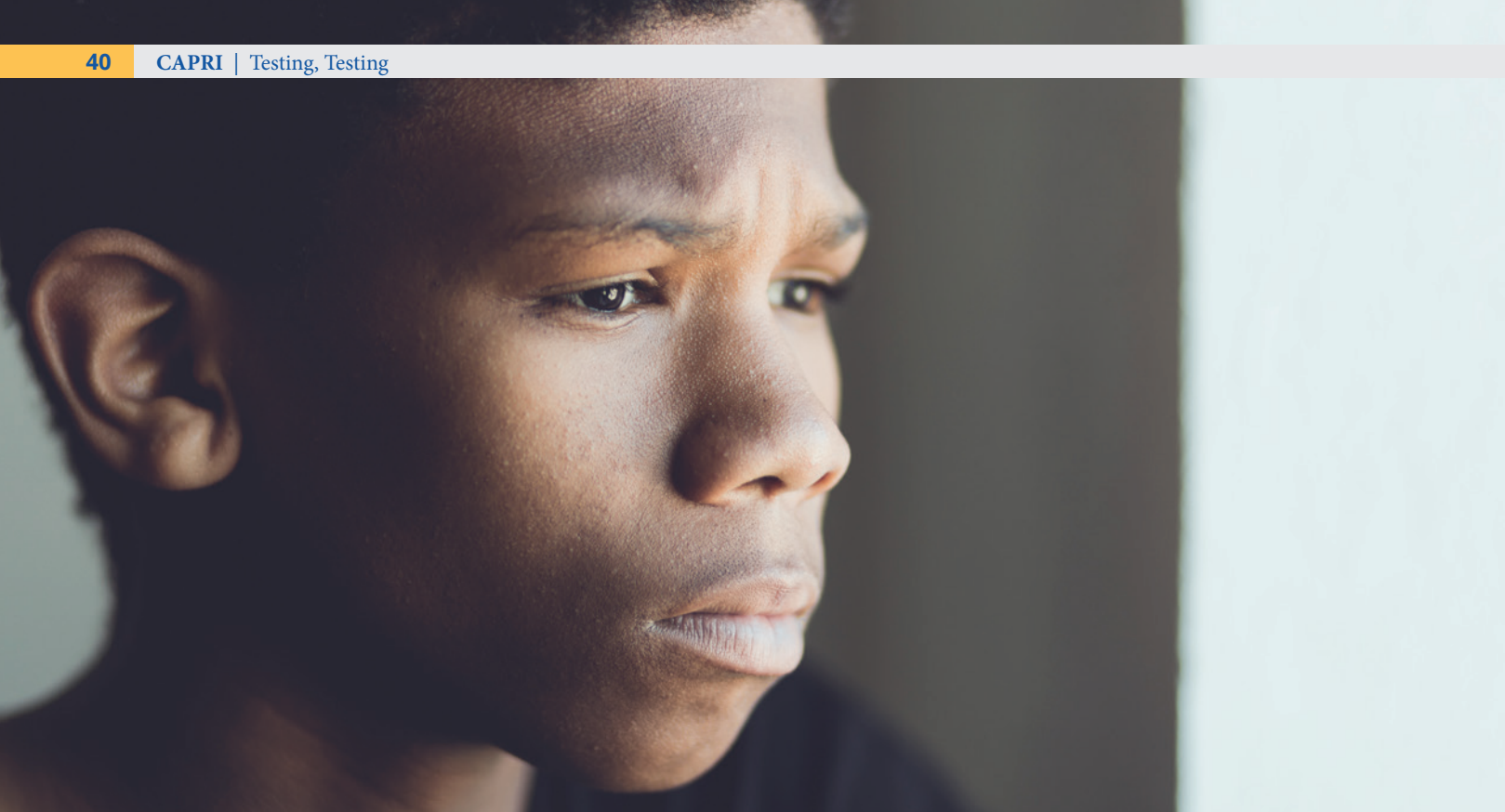
fear of the intervention being deemed to have failed, which might result in a negative perception of the implementing stakeholders. But if an intervention has not met its objectives, that should be acknowledged, and the sooner the better. Further, a programme that did not produce the desired results may still contain useful aspects that could be replicable, including knowledge of what not to do. That is, embracing a notion that success or failure is absolute, particularly in the context of a social programme such as an intervention targeting at-risk youth, is not useful, and does not allow for learning.

There are other components of coherently-designed social interventions that were not examined here, such as the outcomes, outputs, indicators, and activities. Even where an intervention possesses all of these components, however, there is no guarantee that the intervention will be successful. Other questions can and will arise, including: have the right indicators been used to measure the desired change? Is there a coordination and communication plan in place to prevent fragmentation? Is there sufficient capacity in place to give the attention needed for monitoring and evaluation? There are other considerations that would need to be made not only during the design phase, but during the implementation for the programme to adapt.



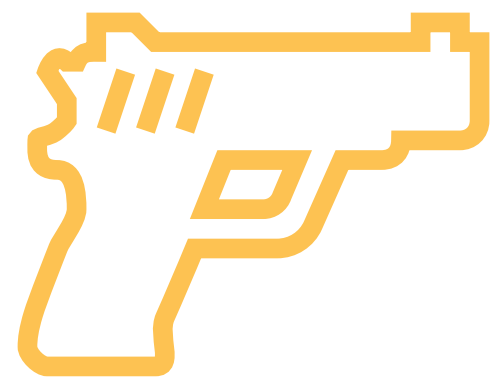
Programmes that are implemented by the government appear to have the weakest approach to monitoring and evaluation, with the exception of the Partnership Towards Youth Crime and Violence Prevention. This is likely because it is funded by a donor agency, and so has had to adhere to the funder’s requirements.

¹⁵⁷ “Core-Partner Grant Programme,” FHI 360, communication with author, March 5, 2021.



5

Conclusion



Jamaica's persistently **high rates of crime and violence**, which have not responded to interventions over decades, continue to **SPUR THE CREATION OF new anti-violence initiatives**

Over the past three decades immense amounts of resources—financial, human, time, effort, opportunity cost—have been expended on social interventions aiming to reduce violence in general, and at programmes targeting at-risk young men in particular. Knowing what works is essential for ongoing strategic allocation of scarce resources to those interventions that have a positive effect, but that cannot be done without knowing what the interventions' effects are, whether positive, negative, or neutral.

Jamaica's persistently high rates of crime and violence, which have not responded to a plethora of interventions over decades, continue to spur the creation of new anti-violence initiatives. Since 2019, the Citizen Security Secretariat, the National Commission on Violence Prevention, and the National Consensus on Crime have been created by the Ministry of National Security, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Chamber of Commerce together with the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica, respectively. They all have recognized the challenge of not knowing what works, and why we don't know

it, and have committed to integrated monitoring and evaluation systems in whatever interventions they carry out.

The analysis undertaken here was simple: to determine the extent to which a sample of interventions targeting at-risk youth, and ultimately the high levels of crime and violence, have included some basic components in their programme design in such a way that the interventions' outcomes can be discerned. Eight of the ten programmes had MEL frameworks, had established a baseline against which to measure change resulting from the intervention, and considered data collection in their framework. Seven of the programmes used theory of change in designing their framework. Six of the programmes had all four of the analysis components.

The study did not look at the efficacy of the components. Where there was a monitoring and evaluation framework in place, as there was in just over half of the programmes, we did not examine those frameworks for their logic or integrity, nor did we attempt to ascertain if the frameworks were actually being utilized

in the implementation of the intervention. We also did not systematically check if the interventions were informed by evidence or based on a proof of concept, either or both of which would have suggested that the intervention, or one very similar, had already been shown to have worked in another, perhaps similar, context. (A couple of the interventions' project information made explicit that they were evidence-informed and/or based on proof of concept.) The goal was to see to what extent a selected grouping of mixed implementers has incorporated monitoring and evaluation frameworks in their anti-violence social interventions, given nearly three decades of attempts to deliver such interventions that aim to reduce violent crime, murder of and by young men in particular.

The weaknesses that have been identified here are not uniquely Jamaican, nor do they pertain only to developing countries. But Jamaica's decisionmakers ought to know better, given that these deficiencies have been acknowledged for over a decade in several reports, studies, and pronouncements. The GOJ ought to have long ago established mandatory

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minimum standards for interventions, and to have improved mechanisms to map and track these activities. A systemic gap persists and until it is resolved, even in the case of programmes which nominally feature correct procedures, then the suboptimal outcomes will persist.

This report has found that collaboration and coordination between various interventions appear to be limited, even though they all possess the same primary objective: to reduce the risk factors and increase the strength factors of youths at risk of participating in crime and violence, thereby improving their chances of becoming contributing members of society, and not becoming another murder statistic.

There is a point to be made about transparency. Access to monitoring, evaluation, and learning reports of social interventions is necessary for transparency and accountability, not just among donors and programme stakeholders, but also civil society and the general population. Access to intervention information, which includes the project documents, as well as the framework and evaluation reports, allows all stakeholders to access and assess a knowledge pool and better practices to tailor their programmes with knowledge of what work or has not worked elsewhere.

Further, it is through civic will and citizens' collective mobilization that policy makers are held accountable for their decisions, management of resources, and, where relevant, failed policies. Transparency ensures that the public is duly aware of the policies that are meant to change their circumstances, whether directly or indirectly. Not only stakeholders, but individual citizens, should have access to the information that would enable them to understand the interventions being carried out around them, demand justification for the

interventions, and to receive explanations as to how and why the target populations and communities have been chosen. By making transparent the process by which a community is selected, for example, questions of partisan favouritism are answered, which then makes it more likely to sustain the intervention across political administrations. Well-designed monitoring and evaluation frameworks are important to transparency and accountability for another reason – the resources that are spent on them. All citizens should have the right to see if the interventions, particularly those using taxpayer dollars, are evidence-based, and entail systematic, rigorous monitoring and evaluation. However, transparency, and the ability to learn from others “what works” remains a challenge with social interventions in Jamaica.

A critique is not an indictment. Interventions are conceptualized and implemented with good intentions, often by committed people who genuinely desire change, and who often go beyond their job descriptions to reach their participants. Where the elements of a well-designed intervention are missing, where there are capacity deficits to integrate structured and objective monitoring and evaluation, even where a baseline measure has not been taken against which to measure progress, there is still scope for learning, and for strengthening the intervention design. While the significant amounts of money, time, and effort that have already been expended may not be recoverable, no more money, time, or effort should be invested in an intervention whose outcome will never be knowable, and where there is no certainty that the intervention even has a chance of achieving its objective. There is expertise and support available in Jamaica and internationally, particularly at the governmental level, to bridge any identified gaps. An intervention with a

theory of change and monitoring and evaluation framework that commences after the intervention is underway is better than no MEL at all.

If national interests, governmental and non-governmental, and international partners intend for Jamaica to ever experience a sustained decrease in violent crime, they need to invest in the necessary resources for systematic monitoring and evaluation of anti-violence social interventions. This investment must be accompanied by a commitment to transparency and accountability of all such interventions. The following recommendations are aimed at supporting these changes.

Recommendations

- 1) **Create and maintain a central coordination unit for social/anti-violence interventions. This should be implemented and maintained by the Citizen Security Secretariat.**

The recent creation of the Citizen Security Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the Citizen Security Plan is an opportunity to create a central entity to list and coordinate social interventions. This would augur well for reducing overlap, particularly where there are several interventions underway in one community, and for understanding an intervention's place in the broader gamut of social programmes. Further, that entity can identify the need for MEL support where an intervention is lacking.

- 2) **Expand the training and use of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning. This recommendation**

should fall under the purview of the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Branch at the Office of the Prime Minister.

As the GoJ seeks to enact a whole-of-government approach efforts should be made to build the capacity across the various MDA'S. The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Branch, situated at the Office of the Prime Minister, has already started trying to work with various entities to expand their capacity. However, there is not only a lack of capacity in MEL, but even where agencies do have MEL personnel, they are often underutilised, and in many instances are not engaged in intervention design from the outset. Concepts such as theory of change, results chains, and baseline measures, as well as an underscoring of the role of MEL from the inception of an intervention, should be integral to all and any social/anti-violence programme, as well as the distinction between outcomes and outputs.

- 3) **Establish a working group of MEL stakeholders, supported by requisite professionals, with the specific task of reviewing the frameworks for the existing**

programmes, and adding MEL where it is missing or inadequate. This effort should be led by the Citizen Security Secretariat.

A working group of MEL would serve two purposes. The first is to establish a network of officers who can develop a working relationship with each other to facilitate a multi-sectoral approach. Secondly, a comprehensive review can provide recommendations to address gaps in the existing programmes and provide guidelines that can be used by other stakeholders. The working group should also develop a tool kit that is accessible to NGOs to assist in developing their MEL frameworks.

- 4) **Publish on a publicly-accessible website the programme frameworks for all government-supported interventions and require the same of NGOs. This effort should be led by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.**

The GoJ has started the process of transparency through its Jamaica Open Data portal. It should go further by uploading programme frameworks for all government interventions and require the

same of NGOs. Whether by expanding the Open Data portal to include these frameworks or uploading them to a Ministry or central website where they can be readily accessed. Good governance requires open access for accountability to occur.

- 5) **Maximize the use of Geographic Information Systems in the coordination efforts. As the Citizen Security Secretariat would be responsible for the centralisation of the social interventions, this they should also have oversight for this.**

The UNDAF Companion Guide highlighted the benefits of using real-time technology for monitoring. The government currently uses GIS for mapping crime and violence areas in communities. The GIS system can be used to track social interventions being conducted in various communities as well as which actors are active in the community. Making CSS the coordinating entity and simultaneously expanding the using of GIS a coordination tool can help to create an effective and efficient coordinating mechanism.

Appendix 1:

Glossary¹⁵⁸

Accountability: The responsibility to act according to clearly defined responsibilities, roles and performance expectations, often with respect to the prudent use of resources, but also accepting responsibility for the failure of fulfillment of project objectives.

Activities: Actions taken, or work performed through which inputs such as funds, technical assistance, and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

At-risk youth: Youth who are vulnerable to circumstances or situations because of their lifestyle and/or living conditions.¹⁵⁹ Should be used as “Youth at-risk of ...”

Baseline study: An analysis describing the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.

Behaviour change: The process of improving or influencing a positive change in attitudes, and lifestyle that is usually driven by socially desirous or socially acceptable behaviour standards.¹⁶⁰

Effectiveness: The extent to which the development intervention’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, considering their relative importance.

Efficiency: A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds,

expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

Environment: is the physical, emotional, or social contexts that shape community and individual attitudes and behaviors.¹⁶¹

Evaluation: The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation, and results. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. Projects, policies, and/or programmes should have both an internal and external evaluation process.

Goal: The higher-order objective to which a development intervention is intended to contribute.

Indicators: Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Inputs: The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention.

Lessons learned: Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programmes, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to

broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.

Monitoring: A continuous and ongoing process that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.

Outcomes: The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs.

Outputs: The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.

Performance measurement: A system for assessing performance of development interventions against stated goals.

Proof of concept: Evidence, typically deriving from an experiment or pilot project, which demonstrates that an intervention concept and/or design is feasible.

Risk Factors: are conditions associated with increased likelihood of a particular disease or condition, e.g., individual behaviors, lifestyle, environmental

exposure or hereditary characteristics.¹⁶²

Social Intervention: Interventions or change strategies that are purposefully implemented with the intent to impede or eradicate social risk factors and enhance protective factors for specific target populations.¹⁶³

Stakeholders: All those who have are affected by or influence youth violence or well-being. This includes the individual, family, communities, educators, policymakers, media, faith-based organisations, private and public sector groups, funders, and society in general.

Sustainability: The continuation of

benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed.

Target group: The specific individuals or organizations for whose benefit the development intervention is undertaken.

Theory of change: This is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or “filling in” what has been described as the “missing middle” between what a programme or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these

lead to desired goals being achieved. The desired long-term goals must first be identified, and working back from these, identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the goals to occur.¹⁶⁴

Unattached: Not affiliated with an organisation (youth group, church, service club, etc), place of employment, institution of training or learning.

Underserved: Individuals who receive inadequate access to service and interventions from the formal social institutions.

158 “Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-based Management,” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2002, <https://oecd.org/development/evaluation/2754804.pdf>. Most of the terms here are taken from this document except where otherwise specified.

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Testing, Testing Challenges to Measuring Social Programmes for At-Risk Youth

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