



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Department of Youth Affairs
Ministry of Health, Sports & Youth Affairs

In Collaboration with

The National Youth Policy Task Force



**EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S LEADERS
TODAY**

Antigua-Barbuda.....



.....Our Vision

We envision a nation in which young Antiguan-Barbudans benefit from supportive and inclusive communities in which they are:

- Valued and respected;
- Supported through social, economic, educational, cultural, technological and employment opportunities;
- Able to live healthy, satisfying and productive lives; and are
- Able to realize their full potential.

We envision a nation in which every Antiguan-Barbudan feels safe, is supported to live a meaningful life and is encouraged to take an active part in nation building.

We wish to realize a nation where each endeavours and all achieves.



The Antiguan-Barbudan Youth.....

Our Vision



A young person who has all the opportunities to develop all of his or her innate talents and whose self actualization is supported by caring adults and a close knit community. He or she takes an active role in the engineering of a society that is prosperous, peaceful and disciplined.

Preface

The road to the formulation of a National Youth Policy has been long and arduous. Over the past 15 years much resources and energies, national and international, have been dedicated to the formulation of a Policy, without yielding any significant tangible results. Despite the fact that a draft policy was formulated in 1999, it lacked national momentum and was never laid in the House of Parliament.

In 2004, when the United Progressive Party (UPP) took office, there was a surge of interest in national youth development. The new administration, keeping to its promise in “Agenda for Change” regarding its commitment to the development of youth, quickly set about establishing a Department of Youth Affairs. This new agency charged with the responsibility of national youth development immediately set the formulation of a National Youth Policy as priority.

The National Youth Policy Process, 2006, started in November 2005 with the coming together of major stakeholders in an activity to analyze the situation of youth and to identify key strategic areas of intervention and development. Subsequently, a National Task Force comprised of representatives of over 35 organizations was constituted in February, 2006. The Task Force met weekly to guide the policy formulation process. The process and the resulting policy therefore were informed by a series of community, media and national consultations with young people, youth groups, youth service organizations youth development partners, NGOs, CBOs and regional and international development partner agencies.

This policy as represented by this document is truly a collaborative effort. It represents inputs the Government of Antigua & Barbuda through the National Department of Youth Affairs supported by the National Youth Policy Task Force, the National Youth Ambassador Corps, Commonwealth Youth Programme, and UNICEF. It also represents the dynamic input of youth, youth organizations and youth development partners. This period of collaboration heralds a new era of youth development and provides a model for the efficient use of scarce resources. The Policy will be supported by a National Youth Development Strategy (NYDS) which will act as the guide to its implementation and monitoring over the next five to ten years.

This Policy provides a conceptual and practical framework for national youth development. Its success depends on not only on political will, or the commitment of the political directorate, but also on the determination of our people, particularly critical stakeholders, to work assiduously towards the empowerment of our young people.

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Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations

AIDS	Auto-Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NYDS	National Youth Development Strategy
PTA	Parent-Teachers' Association
STI	Sexually Transmitted infection

Executive Summary

The National Youth Policy seeks to facilitate the development and maintenance of an environment that is critical to the realization of the fullest potential all our young people. It provides the philosophical and institutional framework for national youth development, as well as outlines the obligations not only of the State but that of major stake holders to the development of our young people, and serve as a tool for advocating for youth involvement and participation in national development. It is expected that the National Youth Policy will assist in fostering a culture that is supportive of positive youth engagement and that it will allow for the provision of services to young people, their families and communities.

The National Youth Policy proposes a **Positive Youth Development Model**. This new paradigm recognizes young people as critical and positive elements in their own and in national development. It is a positive, holistic approach that addresses the development needs of the young person, and puts young people and their families at the heart of development initiatives. Moreover, **positive youth development** is about building resiliency and connectedness; about building competencies and developing the skills and attitudes young people need to take part in society, **now** and in the future. It is important to note that this Model contrasts sharply with the deficits models which focus on simple “quick fix-it” interventions and see young people as problems instead of assets.

Further it is recognized that positive youth development takes place in four (4) interconnected social environments (home, school, peer networks, work environments); and so any initiative geared towards youth development must of

necessity consider the operating forces within these environments. Youth development initiatives must also have as their focus the strengthening of the positive forces and elimination of negative forces within these environments.

Additionally, The Youth Policy has identified five core domains of functioning at the individual level that will have a significant impact on the realization of an empowered citizenry. All citizens therefore, particularly young people, must be trained to effectively function within each of these domains, thus maximizing their contribution to the realization of this vision.

These domains of core functioning are:

1. Interpersonal relationships
2. Parenting/family
3. Employment
4. Self care
5. Care of the environment

Further, the National Youth Policy will facilitate a multi-sectoral approach to youth development, including the strengthening of mechanisms for coordination and collaboration among youth-serving organizations. This multi-sectoral approach necessitates the need for services that are coordinated, and regulated to meet the needs of each young person. This response must take into account the different needs of the various youth constituencies including young men and young women, youth with disabilities, youth in difficult circumstances and from vulnerable communities and youth of different ages. It is expected that this approach will facilitate and promote active youth and stakeholder participation, in youth and national development.

This collaborative and inclusive approach was the hallmark of the policy formulation process. The consultations that informed the process were held island wide and included youth, NGOs, the private sector and members of the public in general. This facilitated dialogue, broad based feedback and ensured the relevance of the resulting document. A number of critical issues identified by the young people of Antigua and Barbuda as well as other key stakeholders who contributed to the policy development process through national and community and media and “e” consultations: Young people were mostly concerned with issues related to education and training (including teacher competence and motivation and relevance of curriculum) and youth governance and participation. Other issues that that were identified included, breakdown of family and inability of parents to offer guidance to children, risky behaviours of young people, crime and violence, difficult gender relations, and the culture of negativity and adult disengagement from youth, and lack of sufficient opportunities for positive youth development.

It is from these and a myriad of other suggestions that eight focus areas for the Policy were developed. These are:

1. Strengthening Social Environments
2. Education and Training
3. Employment and Sustainable livelihoods
4. Health
5. Participation and Empowerment
6. Care and Protection
7. Crime ,Violence and Rehabilitation
8. Gender Equality and Gender Relations

Finally, the National Youth Policy outlines a strategic plan to realize the vision. It sets out the strategic goals and objectives for the key focus areas and calls for the establishment of a national youth development steering committee that will implement and monitor the policy deliverables.

Introduction

The survival of a small developing state is inextricably bound to the development of its people. Antigua and Barbuda is a small island state with a population of 84,330, 62 % of which are young people between the ages of 0 and 35yrs. Young people therefore form a significant portion of the human resource capital base. The Government and the people of Antigua and Barbuda must therefore view the development of its people, particularly the youth as a critical development strategy.

Young people are a precious resource: They make up the largest part of the productive sector; they have a critical role in nation building, and possess specific abilities to learn. They are endowed with self confidence, courage, creativity and a desire for risk. These special qualities equip them to be a positive force in the overall development of Antigua and Barbuda. A robust youth policy must be seen as essential for the creation and maximization of opportunities that will enable this important group to reach its potential.

Young people are also a vulnerable group. Their relative position in the development chain, their limited access to resources, their relative lack of power and autonomy, their propensity for risk taking, and commercial appeal, all contribute to the challenges they face and often times negate efforts to empower them. A robust youth policy is therefore essential to create the enabling environment, within which they will be valued and protected; within which they will grow and flourish.

The Purpose of the National Youth Policy

A national youth policy is of tremendous national import. It represents a nationally agreed upon 'formula' for meeting the needs and aspirations of young men and women. It provides the philosophical and institutional framework for national youth development. The policy is both an acknowledgement of the specific needs of young people and a formal recognition of their potential and unique contribution to national development. Further, it seeks to outline the obligations of the State, the responsibilities of stake holders and young people themselves in creating and maintaining the environment that is critical for the realization of the fullest potential all our young people.

Specifically, our National Youth Policy seeks to:

- Define a common vision and framework for youth development;
- Define, promote and protect the rights, the roles and responsibilities of young people in their personal and national development;
- Serve as a tool for advocating development issues that affect youth; and
- Provide the framework for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of youth development programmes and services.

Policy Values and Principles

The National Youth Policy has drawn on consultations to develop a set of guiding values to underpin the development and delivery of programs and services for young people. These values are:

Value

Commitment

Respect:

The Government and other stake holders will promote and demonstrate respect for young people's educational, economic, social, cultural and artistic and religious aspirations and endeavours and the valuable contributions they make to the community. Programmes and services will also reflect respect for the diversity existent among young people.

Equity and accessibility:

The Government and other stake holders will endeavour to make all services, programmes and resources accessible to all young people. This may however be further guided by needs and priority, with the needs of underserved youth given due attention.

Gender equality:

The Government and other stake holders will actively promote the value of equality and use

this as the basis for provision and delivery of services.

Good governance:

The Government and other stakeholders demonstrate principles of good governance such as accountability, transparency and integrity when developing and implementing programmes and services for young people, and when dealing with individual youth.

Active participation:

The Government and other stake holders must consciously and consistently involve young people along the various stages of the decision making continuum. Young people must be engaged in identifying national problems to developing and executing an action plan and measuring outcomes.

Youth empowerment:

The Government and stake holders will institute measures for young people to be actively engaged and supported in matters that directly affect them, their communities, and the nation.

Active Partnerships:

The Government and other stakeholders will consciously and consistently pursue active partnerships as a means of addressing the issues of youth. Youth development spans

many disciplines and therefore successful youth development demands a collaborative approach

Policy Goals

The National Youth Policy of Antigua - Barbuda seeks:

1. To cultivate a culture of positive youth engagement and participation in decision making at all levels of nation building;
2. To provide the framework to establish, operate and support youth governance mechanisms;
3. To provide a holistic approach to youth development so that all our young people may realize their full potential;
4. To increase the capacity of youth development partners to provide accessible, relevant and high quality services for young people and their families;
5. To provide the framework that will guide the implementation of a multi-sectoral approach to youth development in Antigua & Barbuda; and
6. To support youth mainstreaming throughout national policies and programmes.

Policy Approach

The National Youth Policy seeks to promote the implementation of programmes and provision of services geared towards the holistic development of all of Antigua's - Barbuda's young people. This will provide opportunities for them to pursue their own development and contribute to national development. The policy seeks to promote the following principles:

- Commitment to national development, cultural identity and active citizenship;
- Prioritizing education, knowledge and skills acquisition;
- Promoting healthy lifestyles and positive character development;
- Increasing access to entrepreneurship and professional development;
- Enhancing youth empowerment and participation in nation building;
- Creating and maintaining positive physical and psychological environments for young people (Home, school work and peer spaces);
- Respect for a civilized and culturally diverse society;
- Ensuring the equitable distribution of resources and access to those resources; and
- Emphasizing and facilitating multi-sectoral approaches and inter-agency collaboration.

General Working Strategy

In order to facilitate the participation and empowerment of our young people, all services, programmes, projects and collaborative initiatives whether government led or not will be organized to ensure that:

- Young people are mobilized at the community level as community development catalysts and change agents;
- Youth are encouraged to conserve the identity of the nation through artistic expression, cultural practices, and cultural heritage protection;
- National identity, democratic principles and social justice will be valued by young people, and will be reflected in the nations' dealings with its youth.
- Awareness raising and orientation related programmes will be conducted through youth festivals, youth awareness programmes, workshops and discussions on various national issues and the role of young people in society.
- Resources of national and international private and non-governmental organizations will be harnessed and channeled to the development of the young people.
- NGOs and CBOs working for youth development will be assisted financially, technically and ethically to work creatively, objectively and cooperatively.
- The government, NGO and private sectors will be encouraged to conduct youth related research that will inform the development and delivery of

services and programmes to young people as well as the formulation of policies impacting young people.

- Young people will provide the critical mass of nationals who seek to raise national awareness about environmental conservation, the empowerment of women, gender equality, regional integration, cultural diversity and other essential issues.
- A National Youth Council, which will be an independent organization, will be established at the national level to provide a youth-led vehicle to promote and review the National Youth Policy. The Government will provide technical and financial support to the Council.
- Youth Centres will be the hub of youth development activities and will provide public access for young people to information technologies and other youth development and support services.
- National youth programmes will seek to reach youth most in need of its services. Needs assessment studies will provide the basis on which the policy will reach youth most in need of the services at the most appropriate time.
- Youth development programmes by NGOs and CBOs will be forwarded to the Department of Youth Affairs through a coordinated system that allows for accountability and proper utilization of already scarce resources.
- Youth volunteerism will be promoted.
- Services will be provided through rehabilitation centres for those young people who are physically and mentally challenged, AIDS/HIV victims, and drug addicts.
- Youth development and the empowerment of girls and young women will be emphasized as a strategy for poverty alleviation.

- Young people will be prioritized to obtain vocational and income generation skills, as well as entrepreneurship training provided by CBOs, NGOs and government agencies.
- The legislative and institutional infrastructure to support young entrepreneurs will be established and sustained.

Definition of Youth

As an individual matures, he or she will pass through a series of stages marked by physiological, mental and psychological changes and developmental milestones. In order to maximize growth however, critical cultural, economic and political factors must coalesce to form an environment that nurtures, supports and provides opportunities for self actualization.

It is trite learning that early development lays the ground for later development and success. Hence the challenges of and the requirements for successful negotiation of the formative stages must inform the formulation of any youth development plan. The National Youth Policy then, explicitly delineates the parameters of this formative period.

Defining youth has proved to be an arduous task. While there is no universal definition or national consensus, there is agreement that youth is both a socio-cultural construct and a developmental tool. The United Nations has defined youth as the 15-24 year age group; however, the National Youth Policy of Antigua and Barbuda recognizes youth as that segment of the life span covering 0-35 years. This definition then covers children, teenagers and young adults.

Further, there was consensus that because persons between the ages of **12-30** faced special challenges, they should form the **priority target group** for the Policy. Notwithstanding this however, it was felt that much preventative and development initiatives must be geared towards children in the formative years.

In general, the following age group distinctions can be made in the overall age grouping:

- Pre-school age (0 – 4)
- Primary school age (5 – 11)
- Secondary school age (12 – 16/18)
- Adolescents/young adults (18 – 35)

The National Youth Policy is also cognizant of the special needs and challenges of the following categories of youth. The policy seeks to optimize their development and participation in national development:

- Students (school and college);
- Illiterate youth;
- Girls and Young women;
- Boys and Young men;
- Physically and mentally challenged young people ;
- Young people addicted to drugs;
- Youth involved in prostitution;
- Youth that are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS;
- Vagrant youth;
- Unemployed and under-employed youth;
- Youth failing at school and at CXC;
- Pregnant girls and Teen mothers;
- Young people who migrate to seek employment or to further their education;
- Young workers;
- Young offenders;
- Young people in State care and other institutions;
- Young migrants;
- Single parents;

- Unattached youth;
- Young people in poor and vulnerable communities; and
- Youth practicing alternate forms of religion and lifestyles.

Situational Analysis

Youth in a Changing Social Context

Across time and cultures, young people have shared the same basic psychological needs: the need to belong; for self expression, and identity; for control, autonomy and self direction; for stimulation and excitement. As all others, young people actively seek to satisfy these needs. Those needs have not changed, but the socio-cultural and economic context within which young people exist today has changed drastically. Some of the determinants of this new social context include:

- Globalization;
- Materialism;
- Commercialism;
- Media Influences;
- Cultural Imperialism;
- Lack of family support;
- Migration;
- Technology; and
- The fluidity of communities

Globalization- While our lives continue to be lived in local realities, these realities are increasingly being challenged and integrated into larger global networks of relationships. The forces of globalization are taxing youth and

families worldwide. All social systems are predicated on the need to impart values, morals, skills, and competencies to the next generation. The lives and experiences of youth growing up today are inextricably bound to economic realities, social processes, technological and media innovations, and cultural flows that traverse national boundaries with increasing momentum. The new technologies of globalization generate images, powerful and seductive, of the good life and the good things that make the good life and circulate them worldwide, creating new globalized structures of desire, modernist longings, and with them, feelings of relative deprivation. These global transformations will require young people to develop new skills that are far ahead of what our limited social institutions can now deliver. Additionally, the choices governments are forced to make in light of globalization affect the economy and put more stress on the already deprived sectors of the population.

Materialism – As we become more developed and modern as a nation, ‘self’ is more and more defined in terms of material possessions. Our value is measured in terms of material possessions: clothes, bling-bling, car and house. This, coupled with powerful pressure to be in the in-crowd provides a potent life organizing principle for young people.

Commercialism – “Commercialism influences” is defined as the impact of corporate and industry practices, occurring all together, to produce, manufacture, advertise, and sell products and services to children and teens directly or indirectly through adults—in an effort to meet their bottom line of making endless and gigantic profits generally at the expense of children’s health and well-being. Young people are target for the multinational corporations and businesses that exploit their vulnerability and their

psychological neediness, ultimately shaping values which feed into what has become a negative youth culture. Commercialism must take responsibility for much of what we regard as 'youth culture'.

Negative media influence – Technological advancements have made media one of the most potent influences on our lives. Gone are the days of the sedate, when things were left to the imagination. Today, our young people are bombarded constantly with negative and powerful images of violence, sexuality, intolerance, disrespect in the music, videos, movies, television and films, commercials, magazines and the internet. The media and their messages are so pervasive, so seductive that youth, in particular, do not perceive their influence. Behaviour scientists tell us that Influences are all the more powerful when we do not readily perceive them and so are unable to erect mental barriers against them. Our carefree and indiscriminating youth then, are powerless in the face of the media.

Cultural imperialism – cultural imperialism plays a major role in dissociating people from their cultural roots and traditions of solidarity, replacing them with media created needs. The political effect is the alienation of people from traditions and community bonds and separating individuals from each other. The earlier, the better. And so, cultural imperialism focuses on youth in a significant way for obvious and not so obvious reasons. In Antigua and Barbuda we now see a greater shift towards things foreign. This strong affinity towards adopting values from other cultures, particularly the USA along with a muted sense of their own cultural heritage, serve to compound the challenges of young people.

Lack of support for family – In Antigua & Barbuda, ‘family’ is still ‘work in progress’. Notwithstanding this however, children and teens need care and protection and make huge demands on parents. The truth is many families lack the kind of resources and support to adequately foster the development of children and young people. Added to this, society takes no responsibility in ensuring that families are capable of meeting these challenges.

Migration- Migration is still a reality in Antigua; people move into and out of our Nation with much constancy. As such, many families are disrupted. Children and teens are forced to assume adult responsibilities and young people cut off from consistent, stable support of caring adults.

Information age/technology- There is no doubt that today’s youth are growing up in a vastly different world, and this is due primarily to the advancement in information technology. Theirs, a world, where the computer and the cell phone have moved from the realm of luxury to necessity. Today, young people have access to information and are more knowledgeable than at any other time of human development. This has changed their concept of things such as communicating, community, play and learning, and business.

Sexual-ism- This simply put is ‘in-your-face-sexuality’. Images of lewd sex are everywhere. Sex is an antidote and panacea; it sells everything from cars to cereal to screwdrivers. All this promoted, without value for the relationship, and with a large amount of violence towards and disrespect for women.

Transient nature of communities – Today, people move into and out of communities with such frequency that they do not develop the community spirit or sense of social responsibility that is essential to their participation in and commitment to community development. Therefore our young people grow up in disconnect from their communities, and the community taking no responsibility for the development for their development.

It is within this complex socio-cultural 'hodge-podge' that our young people struggle each day to find their place, grappling with issues of sexuality, violence, education and vocational concerns, unemployment, disenchantment with the status quo, disconnect with adults, all in a culture that is permissive yet restrictive and punitive.

Our social reality is no longer simple, and the solutions relative to our 'youth crisis' are not simple either, nor will real change be evidenced overnight. One thing is evident though, that the solution lies in the realignment of our social values to reflect community spirit and social responsibility, respect, tolerance, justice, gender equality and the active engagement of young people.

Pillars for Youth Empowerment

The National Youth Policy envisions Antigua and Barbuda as a nation of peace and abundance, where all citizens work together to support each other and to build strong communities and a thriving economy.

The empowerment of youth is inseparable to the vision. The Policy identifies some issues and factors that are critical to youth empowerment. More specifically, the Policy identifies four core domains of functioning where skills must be developed; it outlines and promotes a model for youth development - **The Positive Youth Development Model** - and identifies and outlines the rights and responsibilities of youth and the responsibilities of civil society to youth development.



Core Functioning:

The vision of peace, prosperity and connectedness will only be realized when all Antiguan and Barbudans acquire the skills and are committed to function in such a way that their collective actions create the society envisioned. The Youth Policy therefore, has identified five core domains of functioning at the individual level that will have a significant impact on the realization of this vision. All citizens, particularly young people, must be trained to effectively function within each of these domains, thus maximizing their contribution to the realization of this vision.

- **Interpersonal relationships**

Skills that will enable us to relate to each other in healthy ways are extremely important. Young people will be taught skills relating to self awareness, other awareness, negotiation and communication.

- **Parenting**

The family is the most important unit of society. It is the garden where children are nurtured, personalities develop and spirits take form. Yet, in the creation of families most persons are totally unprepared and ill-equipped to facilitate this development. Moreover, they unconsciously repeat bad habits and practices, which stifle the development of children. Parents must be so empowered and supported to facilitate the growth process. Parents must be appropriately skilled. Young people must be trained to

take up their responsibilities as effective parents and the society 'encultured' to support responsible parenting.

- Employment

All citizens should be active contributors to the economic development of the society. Young people must learn the necessary skills that will enable them to be productive citizens and to contribute to the country's economic development.

- Self care

Values and skills relating to self care are important not only to the individual, but to the society as well. Young people must learn skills and attitudes that will support healthy life styles.

- Care of the environment

The natural environment, among other things, provides us with the things we need for our survival: food, air and water. It is incumbent upon us all to protect and conserve the natural resources. Young people must know that they are responsible for the state of their natural environment, and be trained to use, conserve and protect all our natural resources.

The Positive Youth Development Model

The National Youth Policy proposes a shift in how we approach youth development. The new and dynamic paradigm recognizes young people as critical and positive elements in their own and in national development. Moreover, it is a positive, holistic approach that addresses the development needs of the young person. It contrasts sharply from the current models that focus on deficits and 'fix-it' methodologies and interventions. Instead, **positive youth development** is about building resiliency and connectedness; about building competencies and developing the skills and attitudes young people need to take part in society, **now** and in the future.

Positive youth development involves building their social environments (family, school, peer networks and work place) into supportive, positive spheres of influence and engagement for young people so that they:

- feel valued and respected;
- feel they are contributing something of value to society;
- feel connected to and contribute to the groups they belong to;
- believe they have choices about their lives now and their future; and
- feel positive and comfortable with their own identity

It is also about young people being an integral part in decision making processes – having input in decisions that affect them, their family, their community and their country. It is about young people being involved in implementing and

reviewing these decisions and getting meaningful and supportive feedback from caring adults.

Positive youth development takes place in these four (4) interconnected social environments; and so any initiative geared towards youth development must of necessity consider the operating forces within these environments. Moreover initiatives must also have as their focus the strengthening of the positive forces and elimination of negative forces within these environments.

Family

Families have the most potent influence on most young people. The Policy takes cognizance of and respects the diverse family forms existing in Antigua & Barbuda, and recognizes that warm, positive family relationships make a significant difference in the lives of young people. Parents, and others who act as parents, are vital; it is they who must provide most of the support, encouragement and guidance that young people need.

While families play a vital role in youth development and adjustment, it is apparent that families themselves are in crisis. Many families lack the resources, and parents, the technical skills necessary to function effectively. The family must be a strategic point of intervention for youth development. Family strengthening then must be a strategic objective of national youth development.

Healthy families provide:

- Adult leadership and models adult commitment to family;

- A safe physical and psychological environment for children and young people;
- Moral guidance and build self-esteem and resilience;
- Support for academic, social, spiritual and life skills development;
- Clearly defined roles; and
- A model by which young people learn effective communication skills.

Schools

Schools provide most of the formal educational opportunities for young people, and educational qualifications continue to be important in gaining employment, upward social mobility, and an enhanced social status, particularly for young women.

Schools must be places where young people uncover natural abilities, hone skills and receive the support that they need to achieve self actualization. The school environment, mode of instruction and system of administration must collaborate to serve this ultimate purpose.

Effective schools:

- Provide a warm, welcoming environment where individual differences are respected and all students are free from harassment or discrimination;
- Set high standards for all students;
- Respond positively to students' different learning needs and styles;
- Provide opportunities for non-formal education, such as life skills training, sports and recreation;
- Encourage students to appreciate and celebrate their cultural heritage; and

- Encourage and prepare students to participate in decision making through their representation on school committees.

Good schools are also well integrated with the communities they serve. They have strong links with local employers and the business sector, which helps to ensure that students understand the relevance of the curriculum to future job opportunities.

Good schools have a policy of positive home–school collaboration and make a concerted effort to involve parents in the life of the school.

Work Environments

Work, both paid and unpaid, can provide young people with important opportunities to learn work skills, form social connections and make a contribution to family improvement and national development. Paid work (which includes self-employment) is also a source of income.

A positive work environment for young people provides:

- Contact with adults who are likely to interact in ways that promote social confidence and competence;
- Opportunities for skill development;
- Opportunities for interacting with peers in positive, purposeful activities;
- A recognition or a belief that the work is of value; and
- A sense of purpose and achievement.

Workplaces need to offer young people:

- Equal opportunities for employment;

- Freedom from harassment or discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, political or religious belief, or health status;
- Jobs that allow them to develop their skills through training and opportunities for advancement;
- Fair remuneration;
- Safe working conditions;
- Jobs that match their skill level; and
- Recognition of their current and potential skills and their aspirations for the future.

Young people also need accurate information and guidance to support their transition to work.

Community

Many adults in the community have a role in supporting positive youth development. They include neighbours, friends, sports coaches, health care workers, employers, youth workers, social workers and police.

Ideally, these roles reinforce each other in supporting youth development. However, each has the potential to compensate for gaps in the other's contributions.

The community also includes the voluntary and not-for-profit sector, which provides valuable youth development opportunities. The sector includes sports clubs, churches, cultural groups, and youth organisations, which offer:

- Opportunities for socialization and recreation;

- Opportunities to volunteer;
- Opportunities for spiritual development;
- Opportunities for cultural expression;
- Opportunities to strengthen identity by interacting with people who share common interests or concerns;
- Opportunities to learn from and interact with adult friends and mentors;
- Opportunities to attend structured programmes;
- Opportunities to appreciate diversity and practice tolerance; and
- Support for families and peer networks.

Peer Groups

The peer group is of tremendous importance to the young person and has an incredible power to impact their behaviour. It is therefore essential to promote and build peer groups as positive spheres of influence for young people.

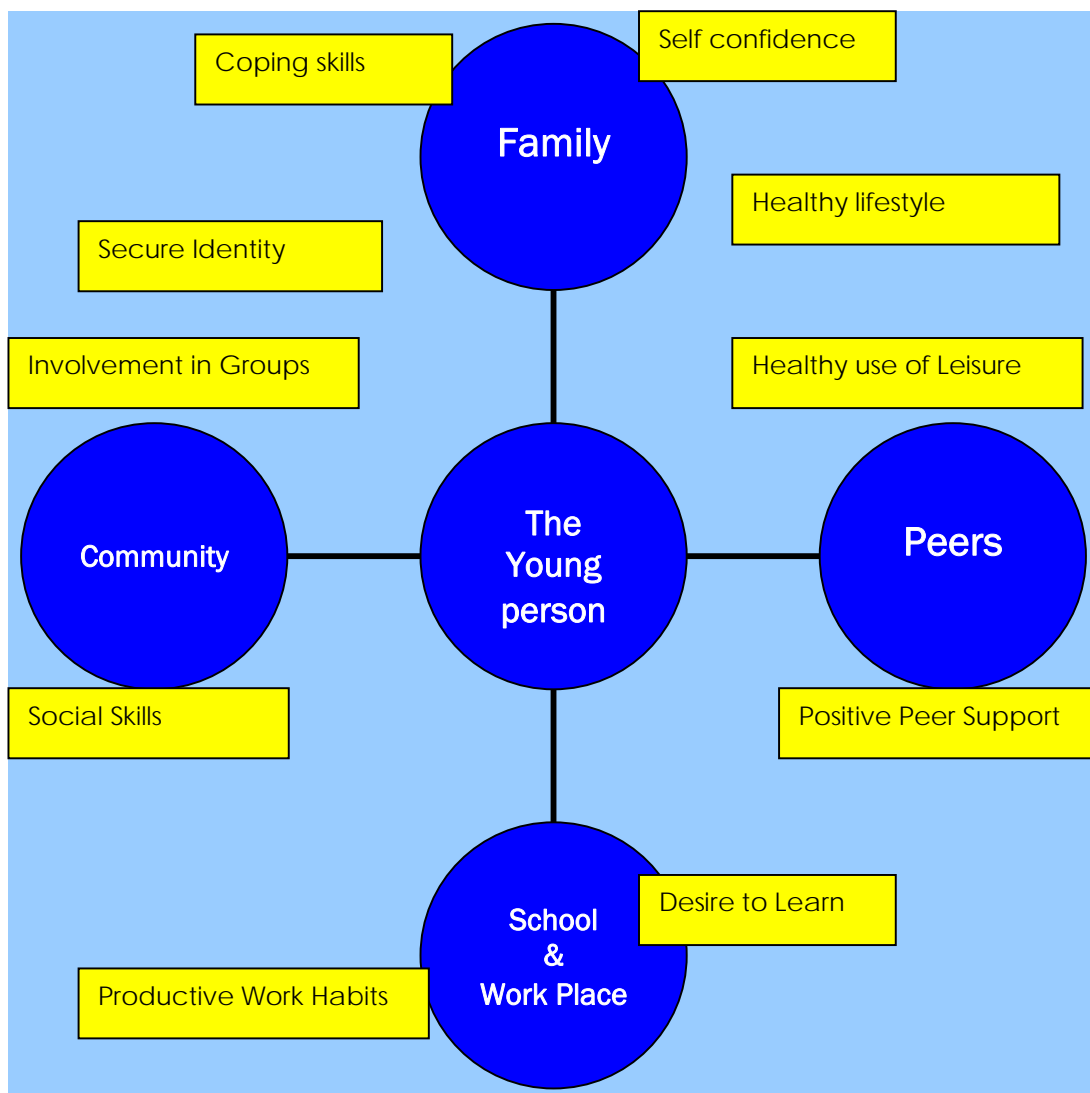
Peer groups provide young people with:

- Friendship and support;
- Role models;
- Feedback from persons within their age group;
- A place for developing and expressing autonomy;
- Opportunities to test decision-making skills in the absence of adults;
- A natural setting for talking, negotiating, socializing and exploring future options; and
- Opportunities for leisure.

The National Youth Policy therefore looks at youth in the context of these social and living environments, and seeks to establish the conditions within these environments that will optimize their growth and development. Ultimately the goal of youth development is to grow a young person into a healthy adult who contributes to the success of his/her country.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Figure 1



This new model of youth development is predicated on the assumptions that:

- Young people are assets;
- Youth people are investors in their own and national development;
- Young people have inalienable rights which must be respected and promoted; and that
- Sound research processes guide the development, implementation and evaluation of programmes and services.

The Rights and Responsibilities of Young People

Rights of Young People

The Policy seeks to promote and protect the rights of young people as provided for by the Constitution of Antigua & Barbuda and embodied in various Acts of Parliament and important international human rights instruments, such as the Education Act, the Domestic Violence (Summary Proceedings) Act, The Sexual Offences Act, the Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). All young people in Antigua and Barbuda regardless of gender, place of origin, creed or religious beliefs, race, political affiliation and sexual orientation should have the following rights:

- The right to quality education, and basic health care;
- The right to participate in all decision-making processes relating to the welfare of the youth;
- Protection from all forms of exploitation, including sexual abuse and child labour;
- The right to participate in governance matters;
- The right to form associations;
- The freedom of opinion, conscience, expression and religion;
- The right to access appropriate information; and
- The right to maintain child-parent relationships.

Responsibilities of Young People

The National Youth Policy actively supports the notion that young people must take responsibility for their own and national development. Young people have a responsibility to:

- Respect and maintain the laws of Antigua & Barbuda;
- Honour and respect the National symbols of Antigua & Barbuda;
- Contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political development of this nation;
- Promote and defend democracy through active participation in the democratic process at all levels;
- Advocate for their development and participation in nation building;
- Promote peace, security and development;
- Obtain a good education, and use this towards securing a good future;
- Refrain from all forms of violence, substance and drugs abuse, and to practice safe sex habits;
- Respect and protect public and private property;
- Promote gender equality and respect for the rights and dignity of girls and women;
- Care for, support and protect those that are less fortunate;
- Discourage acts of violence, crime, exploitation and oppression of vulnerable groups;
- Participate in the fight against STI's and the spread of HIV/AIDS; and
- Protect the environment; and
- Advocate for their development and their participation in nation building.

Collective Responsibility

The National Youth Policy recognizes that young people need assistance to enjoy their rights and meet their obligations to the State through the support of parents, other adults and the State through its various institutions and programmes. The adult population, particularly figures of authority, must take seriously their responsibility as key role models for the positive development of youth. Similarly, the public and private sectors must also be cognizant of their responsibilities to the youth.

Responsibilities of Parents and Other Adults

- Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for providing the basic needs of the youth as well as for creating a positive, supportive and safe environment within which they thrive.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and relevant authorities in society to ensure protection to the young without overpowering and stifling them.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and relevant authorities to recognize the potentials of young persons and to offer respectful guidance for them to develop their abilities and talents.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and relevant authorities to educate youth about human rights, and to ensure that the human rights of the youth are not violated.

Responsibilities of the State

- It is the responsibility of the State to ensure that youth enjoy their constitutional and social rights.

- It is the responsibility of the State to provide an enabling environment for all young persons to achieve self actualization.
- It is the responsibility of the State to design, co-ordinate, evaluate, and monitor all youth-related activities/all stakeholders in youth development.

Responsibilities of the Private Sector

This Policy seeks to encourage private sector initiatives to support youth development. This should take the form of financial contribution, employment creation, and skills training.

General Responsibilities of Stake Holders

A major assumption of this Policy is that youth development is “everybody’s business” and as such its success rests on the willingness of all stake holders to collaborate in the process of youth development, particularly the execution, monitoring and funding of a wide array of programmes. Each stakeholder therefore has the responsibility to contribute to the achievement of the vision of an empowered youth sector by following through on their commitments and providing quality services for youth.

Institutional Framework

Youth Development is a national responsibility. Accordingly, successful implementation of this Policy will require the appropriate institutional framework, including establishing an agency dedicated to its implementation as well as strong collaborative networks involving all stakeholders.

Structuring and Support of the Department of Youth Affairs (DYA)

The Department of Youth Affairs is the governmental agency charged with the responsibility of national youth development. The Department implements its programme through:

- Strategic alliances with national, regional and international partners and agencies;
- Establishing and supporting a National Youth Council and other youth governance machineries
- Zonal/Community Youth Development Officers;
- Community Youth Councils;
- National and targeted programmes; and
- Projects.

In order to enhance efficiency, the Youth Department must be properly structured and adequately staffed with officers who are well trained and committed to the task of youth development.

The following is an outline of a proposed structure of the Department of Youth Affairs. This model was discussed at a CYP's Regional Meeting of Youth Directors' and was unanimously accepted

Proposed Architectural Outline (Proposed by CYP)

Broad functional areas:

1. Policy and Administration
2. Research and Development
3. Program Delivery
4. Social Marketing and Public Relations
5. Support Services

1. Policy and Administration

The *Director of Youth Affairs* has prime responsibility for this functional area. He or she will have overall responsibility for the Youth Department's:

- Management and leadership
- Policy formulation
- Accountability
- Guidance and direction

2. Research and Development/Youth Mainstreaming

The *Research Officer* will have responsibility for:

- Conducting research;
- Analyzing and publicizing research findings;
- Developing programmes;
- Monitoring and evaluating programmes; and

- Youth mainstreaming initiatives.

3. Program Delivery

The Programme Unit Officers will have primary responsibility for:

- Community mobilization;
- Execution of programs and projects;
- Field activities;
- Interaction with youth groups; and
- Providing feed back on the above to the Research and Development Unit.

4. Social Marketing and Public Relations

The Communications/Social marketing Unit Officer will:

- Execute the strategic marketing plan;
- Promote programmes and activities;
- Have responsibility for the publishing of documents; and
- Develop and execute education and public awareness campaigns.

5. Support services

These will consist of:

- a. Clerical services.....Administrative assistant
- b. Technical services.....IT Specialist.
- c. Drivers etc.

Additionally, the Youth Department, guided by the standards and principles established by the Policy will have the responsibility to oversee all youth development programmes. Youth development programmes by NGOs and

CBOs will be forwarded to the Department of Youth Affairs through a coordinated system that allows for accountability and proper utilization of already scarce resources. These programmes must also comply with the youth development standards established by this Policy, and the service providers must meet minimum standards of competence. CYP Competency standards will be the accepted standards for youth development work.

Further, the Policy proposes the implementation of systems to facilitate both inter-ministerial and inter-agency collaboration. The Department of Youth Affairs will take the lead in establishing and maintaining the associated linkages.

This Ministry will play a pivotal role in the professional training of youth workers for Government, relevant NGO's, and youth organizations, particularly as it relates to standards of competence and areas relating to the Positive Youth Development Model on which this Policy is predicated.

Additionally, each relevant government sector will be required to create a youth focal point. The youth focal point will, on a regular basis, provide guidance, monitor youth-related programmes within the ministry, and work with other professionals and agencies toward promoting youth participation in the decision-making process.

National Youth Ambassador Corps

The National Youth Ambassador Corps is designed to provide a platform for young people to become youth advocates who would represent the concerns, needs, and successes of the nation's youth at the local, regional and international levels. Young people will be given opportunities to participate in the development of their communities and the nation.

The National Youth Ambassador Corps is intended to facilitate a youth supported strategy for a civil society that advances positive youth development through increased youth participation and healthy youth/adult experiences and interactions. Further this mechanism will help to facilitate youth mainstreaming, and promote the culture of positive youth engagement.

One of the major functions of the youth Ambassadors is to serve as advisors on youth affairs to Director of Youth Affairs in an effort to increase the relevance of programming, to promote community awareness of the needs of youth and to serve as a line of communication between youth and adults as well as among the youth. Consequently, the Youth Ambassadors work directly with the Department of Youth Affairs and are directly accountable to the Director of Youth.

National Youth Council

The National Youth Council will be the national umbrella organization for all youth organisations in the country. The Council, an autonomous body, will play a supportive role in the implementation of all youth related initiatives. It will serve as a channel of communication, for all issues including Government policy and programmes, to all affiliated youth organisations.

Zonal/Community Youth Councils

Zonal/community youth councils will be established to mobilize youth activity within local communities and to facilitate and support youth development work in these locales. These councils will be made up of youth groups and youth service organizations in the zones. These will be autonomous and will be supported by the Department of Youth Affairs through the direct work of the youth development officer responsible for the zone.

National Youth Agenda



"..... coordinated responses from all of the social partners, including the church, in providing a network of support and opportunity for young people"

Sir James Carlisle Governor General of Antigua & Barbuda

(Throne Speech 2005)

The consultation process identified a numbers of issues that severely affect the development of young people in Antigua & Barbuda. Education was by far the most significant issue. Here, issues raised included the relevance of the curriculum, involvement of students and parents in the administration of schools, the linkages between the school and work environment, and lack of school-work transition mechanisms and the preparedness of teachers. Generally young people were of the view that the educational system needs to be revised to a more holistic model, allowing it to adequately cater to its diverse student population.

Following is an overview of the critical issues identified by the young people of Antigua and Barbuda as well as other key stakeholders who contributed to the policy development process through national and community and media and "e" consultations:

1. Health:

- HIV/AIDS: HIV/AIDS remains the greatest health threat to young people. Youth between the ages of 15 to 29 remain the most vulnerable; young women face a greater risk of infection;
- Reproductive rights and reproductive health;
- Obesity;
- Drug use and abuse;
- Violence against children and youth; and
- Risky behaviours, including road use.

2. Employment & Sustainable livelihood:

- Inadequate formal preparation;
- Lack of school- to- work (internship) programmes;
- Job creation;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Skills training;
- Career and life planning; and
- Cooperative endeavours

3. Crime and violence:

- Juvenile offenders and juvenile justice;
- Rehabilitation;
- Drug use and abuse;
- Gang involvement;

- Crime prevention; and
- Crimes against youth

4. Education & Training:

- Drop out and truancy;
- Needs of Special children;
- Illiteracy;
- Educational opportunities for teen mothers and pregnant girls;
- Positive student engagement;
- Disengagement of boys from school;
- High retention rates and low academic achievement; and a
- Restrictive curriculum.

5. Gender Relations and Gender Equity:

- Education of teen mothers;
- Motivation of boys and young men;
- Prostitution;
- Poverty;
- Domestic violence;
- Empowerment of girls and young women;
- Legislative reform; and
- Increase in HIV/AIDS infections in young women.

6. Youth Protection:

- Integrated social services;
- Incest and abuse;
- Foster care;
- Legislative reform;
- Rights of children and young people; and
- Special measures for youth with disabilities

7. Youth Participation:

- Youth Policy;
- National Youth Council;
- Governance mechanisms ;
- School councils;
- Youth involvement in the development of their communities; and
- Opportunities for volunteerism.

The National Youth Policy has taken these concerns into consideration and has identified identifies eight focal areas that are regarded as critical to youth development and empowerment:

1. Strengthening Social Environments
2. Education and Training
3. Employment and Sustainable livelihoods
4. Health
5. Participation and Empowerment

6. Care and Protection
7. Crime ,Violence and Rehabilitation
8. Gender Equality and Gender Relations

Strengthening Living and Social Environments

Young people play, work, learn and live in social environments. These environments and the relationships that are played out in them, have a tremendous impact on the development of young people. The health of these environments is therefore of significant importance to the Youth Policy and as such, the Policy seeks to strengthen and support these environments such that resiliency factors are strengthened and risk factors are eradicated.

Goal: To cultivate supportive families, communities and social networks that result in an environment that will facilitate young people's positive development and well-being.

Target Groups:

- Youth who are abused
- Youth from dysfunctional family situations
- Vagrant youth
- Youth living alone
- Single-parent households headed by youth
- Youth in poor communities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1. To promote the strengthening of families to provide a supportive environment for youth development.**

- To establish and support community based family outreach programmes that provide parenting skills, and counseling services for youth and their families, and;
- To advocate for the establishment of PTA's in all schools, and a National Parent Coalition.
- By advocating for upgrading of the living and social environments for all youth, including housing, recreational space, clean air and water; and by promoting the safety and security of all places that youth frequent.

2. To promote strengthening of community programmes to support families.

- Through special community based initiatives to support teen and young parents and families living with issues such as domestic violence, alcoholism, drugs and chronic criminal activity.
- By supporting community-based initiatives to help poor families.
- By promoting family participation in the design and delivery of community programmes.
- By encouraging schools, churches and service organizations to use family empowerment models in their work with youth and families.
- To advocate for national initiatives to develop and support families such as National Family Week and a family development and support agency

3. To promote and build their social environments as positive spheres of influence and engagement for young people.

- By supporting programmes that allow youth to contribute to the development of their social environments (school, work, peer networks).
- To promote initiatives that would build protective factors and decrease risk factors operating in their spheres of influence.
- To facilitate programmes that would increase the capacity of adults in these environments to support positive youth engagement.
- To develop and promote standards of practice that guide youth engagement.

4. To advocate for a culture supportive of youth development

- By promoting the critical role of the media in advancing the call for a positive youth culture.
- Through the development and full enforcement of policies and laws to reduce domestic violence and abuse of children.
- By supporting legislation that is predicated on 'the best interest of the child'.
- By highlighting and publicizing 'best practices' in respect of youth development in all areas of social endeavour.

- Through advocacy by promoting the importance of positive youth development and the role of youth development workers as a professionals

Points of Strategies for intervention

- Parent education
- Parent Association
- Youth centres
- Strengthening youth sport programmes
- Establishing & Promoting Ethical standards for youth development workers
- Mentorship programmes
- National competency standards for youth development workers
- Family support initiatives

Major Partner Agencies

Ministry of Health Youth Affairs & Sports
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Social Transformation
Ministry of Labour

Education & Training

"Everyone needs to find their place and be their best at what they are good at"
Bernard Warner
Association for Persons with Disabilities

Education is by far the single most important contributor to personal and national development. It therefore behooves us to create educational opportunities for all youth as well as creating a culture facilitative of their academic and vocational aspirations. During the consultation process, young people identified a number of issues critical to their education and looked to the Policy as a way forward.

Goal: All youth completing secondary level education and mastering the skills that will enable them pursue their own goals of personal development, as well as contribute to the welfare and productivity of the nation.

Special Target Groups:

- Out of school youth
- Youth failing in school
- Teen mothers and pregnant girls
- Youth with disabilities
- Boys, and young men
- Girls and young women
- Children in early childhood Development Centres

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To assert the right of all youth to quality education

- Through advocacy, for an increase in the number of students transitioning to secondary school and the improvement of quality of education at the secondary level.
- To advocate for the placement of qualified/trained school personnel and for the continued teacher/school personnel training.
- By encouraging regular school attendance and reducing dropout rates due to economic and other factors.
- By supporting implementation of Student Support Services to include Guidance & Counselling; school health specialists, and school social work.
- By supporting the implementation of Health and Family Life Education; values, attitudes and life skills.
- By strengthening and expanding the technical, vocational and artistic component of secondary education to cater to diverse students' aptitude and interest.

2. To advocate for an education system that is relevant to the needs of youth and those of potential employers.

- By conducting a thorough review of the existing formal education system to assess its relevance to the needs of Antiguan and Barbudan youth.

- To advocate for an education system that is predicated on research.
 - By assisting in the process of refining standards, indicators and an information system to monitor the delivery of formal and non-formal secondary, vocational and tertiary education.
 - To facilitate the formalization of links between the education sector and work sector.
3. **To promote and foster the participation of students in the administration of their institutions.**
- To advocate for the establishment and formalization of student councils, and a National Student Guild.
 - To provide opportunities for training to support student activism, leadership and participation.
4. **To facilitate increased access to quality skills training opportunities relevant to the CSME and the global market place and to advocate for the use of local products by:**
- Strengthening skills-based programmes and expanding course offerings, especially in areas such as agriculture, Information Technology, and the creative and cultural arts.
 - Developing competency standards, with the necessary accreditation and licensing mechanisms with specific relevance to CSME.

- Providing training and infrastructure to enable young people to use ITC technologies on the global market place, as a means towards sustainable livelihoods.

5. To develop and implement a programme for identifying and supporting special children that would:

- Introduce educational testing early in the educational system to identify special needs children and children at risk.
- Train and place relevant practitioners that would identify special children
- Develop and implement comprehensive programme designed to challenge and support special needs children as well as to facilitate their integration into mainstream education where possible.
- Advocate for programmes that support families with children with disabilities.
- Promoting initiatives that identify and support children and young people with special talents and abilities.

6. To promote the implementation of standards in support of early child development and to:

- Support the implementation of standards governing the establishment and administration of preschool and daycare centres.

- Advocate for the implementation of comprehensive, holistic early childhood education.
- Promote programmes that strengthen families and build parent capacity to raise healthy children.

7. To facilitate the education of pregnant teen girls and teen mothers by:

- Advocating for the rights of all girls, including teen mothers and pregnant girls, to quality education.
- Supporting the establishment of a system of academic and emotional support for pregnant girls and teen mothers.

8. To develop and implement strategies to improve male performance up to the secondary level and their matriculation to the tertiary level by:

- Conducting a comprehensive analysis of risk and protective factors relative to male academic performance
- Implementing programmes designed to realign boys' academic interest with a view to optimizing their life chances.
- Building the capacity of teachers and the education system as a whole to respond to specific needs of boys as learners.
- Building a culture of positive male engagement

9. To establish schools as health promoting communities, safe zones and a hub of community empowerment by:

- Advocating for schools to be seen as “health promoting communities”, where psychological and physical health are regarded as necessary preconditions for academic success.
- Promoting the use of school premises for community development activities.
- Advocating for areas around schools to be designated as ‘safe and drug-free zones’ and for specific measures to be taken to ensure safety.
- By establishing schools as family support systems, where consistent efforts are made to build parents’ capacity and to strengthen families.

Strategies for Intervention

- Revamping of curriculum to assist in the transition from school to work
- Research based education system
- Apprenticeship programmes
- Increase scholarship offerings and availability
- Policy implemented to secure the return of teen mothers to school
- Reassess the validity of the common entrance examination.
- Evaluation of the junior secondary model
- Evaluate the introduction of Summer school for students with marginal performance to facilitate transition to the next level
- Improve terms and conditions of the profession so as to attract highly skilled, motivated professionals.
- Building home-school partnership
- Parent education initiatives
- Formalizing school counseling as an integral part of the education system
- Early identification and intervention programs for young learners with learning challenges as well as those who are gifted
- Improve service delivery for children with learning and physical disabilities

Major Partner Agencies

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
- Ministry of Labour
- Ministry of Legal Affairs and Justice
- Business sector organizations
- Community councils
- NGOs
- PTAs

Health

*"Young People must have access to information and services
and be encouraged to take responsibility for their health"*

*Leandra Lewis
Anglican Youth*

Young people account for a significant part of the population and their health is critical to the productivity of the nation. Young people must take seriously their health and be encouraged and supported to make choices that safeguard and improve the quality of their lives. Further, the government is obligated to ensure that young people have access to information and services to optimize their health status.

Goal: To cultivate an environment where young people actively pursue healthy lifestyles and enjoy optimum physical and mental health.

Priority Target Groups:

- Teen mothers
- Youth at risk of early pregnancy, substance abuse, HIV and other STIs
- Youth from lower income families
- Youth in institutional care
- Youth with disabilities
- Young women
- Young men
- Adults (parents, teachers, school counselors, health care providers) influential in young people's lives and responsible for the implementation of youth focused health activities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **To create, through advocacy networks, a supportive policy environment that fosters positive health outcomes by:**

- Reviewing and revising existing legislation that touch and concern youth health and well-being, such as the age of consent to sexual intercourse, marriage and accessing general health and reproductive health services.
- Advocating for legislation that would address the reproductive rights and protection for persons with disabilities.
- Supporting the review of legislation on penalties surrounding drug, weapons, violence and sexual offences against youth.
- Supporting the establishment of youth-centred advocacy networks to promote positive youth policies.
- Advocating for legislation for reproductive rights and protection of persons with disabilities.

2. **To improve knowledge and influence attitudes relative to critical health practices and behaviours by:**

- Collaborating with other agencies to devise a strategic approach, and develop a cohesive set of intervention measures for targeting priority behaviours.
- Increasing access to information on protective and risk factors which influence healthy behaviours.

- Implementing broad-based community initiatives to raise awareness of specific negative behaviours and lifestyle choices that adversely impact health such as substance misuse, early commencement of sexual intercourse or unprotected sex.
- Promoting gender equality and the reconstruction and transformation of societal norms and cultural practices relative to masculinity and femininity.
- Collaborating with the media to promote healthy youth behaviours and reduce depictions of violence, irresponsible sexual behaviour, and irresponsible road usage and negativity.
- Supporting the work of respective partners to increase knowledge of the efficacy of condoms, abstinence and fidelity in prevention of sexually transmitted infections and prevention of pregnancy.
- Supporting programmes which emphasize raising awareness of the health and behavioural risks of drug, alcohol and early sexual initiation and programmes dedicated to strengthening youths' resistance skills and protective factors.
- Establishing and promoting standards for healthy life styles for adults who work with young people, and safety for programmes young people are involved in.

2. To improve the quality of health services and increase access to such services that will:

- Provide youth-friendly health services that are accessible to all youth.
- Expand access to counseling and effective contraception as a way to reduce unwanted pregnancies and abortion.
- Support the provision of services that are sensitive to and appropriate for the needs of youth;
- Advocate for the establishment of facilities to provide treatment and support to youth who misuse drugs.
- Develop and support programmes that build capacity of young parents to take care of their children.
- Develop programmes that address youth mental health care issues and support facilities in their care.
- To advocate for special consideration to be given to persons who are parents to access these services.

Strategies for intervention

- Adolescent Health Care facility with integrated comprehensive youth friendly services
- Sex Education in schools
- Community family & parent support initiatives
- Health and Family Life Education
- Consistent public awareness programmes/campaigns
- Legislative reform (teen access to reproductive health care)
- Comprehensive and integrated drug education and rehabilitation programme
- Stressing Fidelity as a cultural value
- Gender sensitivity training
- Comprehensive school guidance-counselling programme
- Healthy lifestyle programme
- Substance prevention and rehabilitation programmes

Major Partner Agencies

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education
- Department of Youth Affairs & Sports
- Ministry of Social Transformation
- Ministry of Legal Affairs & Justice
- Directorate of Gender Affairs
- AIDS Secretariat
- Ministry of Legal Affairs & Justice
- Drug Education and Information Unit
- Sports Department

Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods

"I am concerned that when I grow up there will be no jobs for me"

*11 yr old student
Cedar Grove Primary*

Employment is critical to young people. Unfortunately many of our youth are unemployed or underemployed. This feeds into negative and socially deviant behaviours that have serious implications for our struggling economy. This policy addresses the need for, education, skills and the environment to support their sustainable livelihoods.

Goal: To create opportunities for employment and support an environment that promotes entrepreneurship.

Priority Target Groups:

- Young women
- Youths with disabilities
- Youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
- Youth entrepreneurs
- Young people transitioning to work
- Young people in special circumstances
- Young persons transitioning from rehabilitation or prison

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To optimize chances for employment for all youths by:

- Supporting revision of the education system to address the diverse needs and support the varied aspirations of its student clientele

- Supporting career education and life planning programmes and initiatives
- Advocating for relevant educational and skills training opportunities in the formal and NGO sectors;
- Promoting on-the-job training opportunities, work experience and placement programmes;
- Encouraging research and planning for training and skills sets and qualifications that are needed on the job market
- Fostering direct linkages between the education and employment sectors.
- Promoting the idea of expansive market for youth people with particular reference to CSME and e-commerce.

3. To increase the number of employment initiatives for young people by:

- Promoting the provision of incentives for employers who employ inexperienced youths;
- Promoting and supporting youth innovations in the agricultural, cultural, creative arts and technological fields in Antigua & Barbuda.
- Encouraging schools and communities (church, youth groups) to provide experience for young people to learn livelihood skills
- Supporting programmes seeking to increase livelihood skills in young women as a means of poverty reduction

4. To foster a culture of entrepreneurship and increase the number of support mechanisms for entrepreneurs by:

- Advocating for the strengthening of loan programmes to facilitate access to youth friendly credit.
- Advocating for special concessions to be granted by government to young entrepreneurs particularly in the fields of agriculture, technology and the creative arts.
- Fostering training in the areas of entrepreneurship and enterprise development for youth (in and out of school) as early as possible.
- Promoting self-employment as a viable alternative to traditional employment.
- Supporting national recognition initiatives that highlight the successes of young entrepreneurs.
- Supporting the development of young entrepreneurs networks and cooperatives.

Strategies for intervention

- Job creation
- School to work transition programmes
- Entrepreneurship
- Technical support for young entrepreneurs
- Skills training
- Career and life planning
- Career Fairs
- Cooperative endeavours
- Job availability
- Job market research
- Apprenticeship
- Accessing start-up capital
- Special initiatives targeting youth with disabilities and those transitioning from rehabilitation centres

Major Partner Agencies

Ministry of Education
Ministries of Legal Affairs & Justice
Department of Youth Affairs & Sports
Ministry of Labour
Ministry of Culture
Ministry of Tourism
Ministry of Agriculture
Business Sector Organizations
Ministry of legal Affairs & Justice
Prison

Participation and Empowerment

*A country should promote and take care of its young people
12 year old Respondent*

Goal: To foster a culture that allows for the full participation of young people in the social, spiritual, economic and political processes of the society.

Priority Target Groups

- Unattached youth
- Youth with disabilities
- Marginalized youth
- Youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
- Young women

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1. To enhance the capacities of young people to participate in the many aspects of social life by:**
 - Developing and supporting programmes that seek to build the leadership capacity amongst young people.
 - Strengthening programmes for mentorship and volunteerism among youth.
 - Promoting the development of mechanisms to allow youth greater access to information and opportunities to voice their opinions and impact planning and decision-making at all levels of social life.

2. To create spaces and provide opportunities to increase participation of young people, including youth with disability and marginalized youth, by:

- Supporting the participation of young people in planning and making decisions about their own futures.
- Promoting and supporting the establishment of youth governance networks at the school, community and national levels.
- Creating opportunities for young men and women to participate in statutory, private and voluntary boards and organizations at all levels of decision making, particularly at the national level.
- Facilitating the appointment of Youth Ambassadors, who like their adult counterparts, will enjoy national recognition and will be accorded the necessary resources to enable them to carry out their mandate.
- Facilitating inter-island, regional and international youth exchange opportunities.
- Organizing programmes and activities aimed at recognizing youth who have achieved in various disciplines and have contributed to community and national development;
- Promoting sports as an avenue for fostering increased participation, developing leadership skills and building character; and by advocating that coaches and other sport personnel who engage young people, receive training in youth

development and practice the ethics relative to youth development as outlined in this Policy.

3. To provide through cultural and creative arts, expression opportunities for developing self and civic pride by:

- Advocating for the development of facilities at the community and national levels that would be dedicated to the development and display of cultural and creative arts and talents.
- Organizing programmes and activities aimed at supporting and recognizing youth who have an interest in cultural development.
- Supporting after-school programmes that focus on values and attitudes, sports and culture.

4. To facilitate a culture of youth “positivity” by:

- Collaborating with the media to provide positive spaces for young people to contribute to the shaping of this positive image of youth.
- Supporting and providing opportunities for youth volunteerism.
- Instituting National Youth Awards as a means of recognizing achievement.
- Institutionalizing National Youth Week as a means of showcasing youth, thereby helping to promote this culture of “positivity”.

Strategies for intervention

- Youth Policy
- National Youth Council
- Youth Governance mechanisms
- Youth Parliament
- Youth involvement in the development of their communities
- Youth involvement and leadership cultivated and supported within the school system (School Councils)
- Using sports and culture as means of engaging young people
- Community Centers
- Culture of positivity towards young people

Major Partner Agencies

Ministry of Education
Department of Youth Affairs & Sports
Ministry of Culture
Ministry of Social Transformation
Ministries of Legal Affairs & Justice
National Youth Council
Zonal Youth Councils
Youth groups & clubs
Media

Care and Protection

"We have feelings; we have needs; we have rights too"

Melville Browne

*Trainee at the Rehabilitation Centre for
Persons with Disabilities*

Young people are especially vulnerable and so there is no wonder that they are in need of care and protection. There is however a group of young people who are especially at risk. They suffer abuse, and live with disability; they live in vulnerable communities and difficult family circumstances. The National Youth Policy seeks to address their special circumstances in an attempt to improve their life chances.

Goal: To promote a society that provides care and protection to all youth, especially those youth in disadvantageous situations, those with physical and mental challenges and those whose rights have been undermined.

Priority Target Groups

- Youth at risk of juvenile delinquency
- Abused Youth
- Youth with special needs, physical and mental disabilities
- Disadvantaged youth
- Youth in State care and institutional services (foster care, children's homes, places of safety, juvenile rehabilitation centres, prison.)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **To develop resiliency factors in youth, especially youth at risk:**

- Through support for institutions and programmes that will instill positive values and attitudes in parents and youth;
- By reinforcing and implementing public and private sector programmes for youth who are at high risk of becoming neglected and uncared for; and
- By supporting the strengthening of early detection systems and implementing community-based prevention programmes.

2. To advocate for the provision of the highest quality services for those who are in need of care and protection:

- Through the implementation and review of standards of care for youth who have been abandoned, abused, neglected or in conflict with the law;
- By developing and delivering a comprehensive and holistic regimen of care that is predicated on “the best interest of the youth”;
- By revising and Implementing the National Child Agency Act;
- To strengthen inter-ministerial and inter-agency collaboration with regards child protection issues;
- To support standards of professional ethics and accountability for quality care provided by the relevant professionals, and agencies;
- By supporting the development of standards to monitor and evaluate youth facilities to ensure friendliness for youth with special needs;

- To integrate the family into the service delivery model; and
- By supporting programmes that provide capacity building of staff who work with youth in need of care and protection.

3. To facilitate the successful reintegration of all youth who are in special care with their family and the society by:

- Advocating for the development of programmes to regulate provision and termination of care;
- Developing and strengthening programmes that equip wards of the state with skills to enable them to re-enter society; and
- Strengthening the capacity of families, communities and institutions to receive wards of the state on termination of care.

POINTS OF/STRATEGIES FOR INTERVENTION

- Family support systems and parent education
- Counselors in schools
- Reforming the education system to cater for all students
- Portrayal of positive images of youth in the media
- Skills and entrepreneurship programmes for youths
- Mentoring Programs
- Early intervention programmes/initiatives
- Legislative reform (crimes against youth)
- Integrated social services
- Youth mobilization at community levels
- Community Centers

Major Partner Agencies

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports

Ministry of Education

Ministries of Legal Affairs & Justice

Ministry of Social Transformation

Probation Department

Ministry of Labour

Business Community

Police Force

Media

Ministry of Health

Rehabilitation Centre for persons with Disabilities

Crime, Violence and Rehabilitation

“When young people have jobs and are positively engaged they will not commit crimes”
16 yr old Respondent

Crime and violence and the subsequent rehabilitation of young people are major national concerns. In Antigua and Barbuda a growing number of young persons are affected by crime, both as perpetrators and victims. Consequently, the National Youth Policy proposes a number of interventions including preventive and remedial programmes, legislative reform, and re-integration and family support initiatives.

Goal: To promote a society that respects the rule of law and to facilitate the rehabilitation of those youths who run afoul of the law.

Priority Target Groups

- Youth at risk of Juvenile delinquency
- Youth in special circumstances such as poverty or dysfunctional family situations
- Youth from vulnerable communities
- Girls
- Youth in State care, Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres and prison
- Vagrant youth, those on drugs, and those who are mentally challenged
- Young women

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- 1. To advocate for a policy environment that supports youth’s**

responsibility towards the creation a safe and peaceful society.

2. To advocate for a policy environment that supports young people's due process rights by:

- Encouraging the review and amendment of existing legislation that tend to limit the right of young people to due process.

3. To engender a culture of respect and caring among our youth by:

- Supporting institutions and programmes designed to instill positive attitudes and values in our youth.
- Supporting programmes, both government and community based, that target youth at risk (juvenile delinquency and drugs).
- Implementing programmes that provide opportunities for young people to actively demonstrate caring and respect especially to those in difficult circumstances.

4. To provide for the total rehabilitation of young people who run afoul of the law by:

- Advocating for the establishment of an Inter-agency Juvenile Care Advisory Committee.
- Establishing minimum standards that will guide delivery of all youth programmes and services.
- Reviewing and revising the Juvenile Detention Act.

- To advocate for a comprehensive review and upgrading of the existing juvenile detention facilities and setting in place a holistic programme of rehabilitation, based on the development model proposed in the Policy.
- By advocating for the establishment of a juvenile rehabilitation centre for girls and the implementation of a holistic and comprehensive programme of rehabilitation based on the developmental model outlined in this Policy.
- By advocating for the continued training of law enforcement, probation officers and other professionals in an effort to effectively and consistently address the needs of youth in juvenile facilities and youth who offend.

5. To advocate for the establishment of a coordinated system of services to address youth crime and violence

- To advocate for the establishment of a special committee to monitor youth crime and violence as well as guide the delivery of service and programmes
- To facilitate the training of professionals who interface with youth who run afoul of the law.

6. To provide alternatives for positive youth engagement through the:

- Support of programmes that promote youth volunteerism;
- Promotion and development of support groups for young people to work through conflicts as well as develop social skills;
- Support of programmes that assist youth in the transition from a life of crime and antisocial behaviours; and

- Advocacy of sports and culture as a means of positive youth engagement.

POINTS OF/STRATEGIES FOR INTERVENTION

- Family support systems and parent education
- Counselors in schools
- Reforming the education system to cater for all students
- Portrayal of positive images of youth in the media
- Skills and entrepreneurship programmes for youths
- Youth Ambassadors attached to the Police
- Mentoring Programs
- Creating more employment opportunities
- Early intervention programmes/initiatives
- Legislative reform (crimes against youth)
- Comprehensive rehabilitation programmes for young offenders
- Integrated social services
- Youth mobilization at community levels
- Community Centers
- Comprehensive sports programmes in communities

Major Partner Agencies

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports
 Ministry of Education
 Ministry of Social Transformation
 Ministries of Legal Affairs & Justice
 Probation Department
 Ministry of Labour
 Business Community
 Police Force
 Media

Gender Equality and Gender Relations

Goal: To foster a culture where young women and young men are equally regarded and afforded equal opportunities and are given tools to pursue meaningful and satisfying relationships with each other.

Priority Target Groups:

- Girls and young women
- Boys and young men
- Teen mothers & pregnant girls
- Young women in special circumstances

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **To advocate for a supportive policy environment that promotes gender equality and fosters positive and supportive relationships between young men and women:**
 - To promote gender mainstreaming;
 - To advocate for the implementation of CEDAW , its optional Protocol, the Millennium Development Goals , the Belem do Para and other international instruments that promote gender equality;
 - To support existing legislations that promote gender equity;
 - Promote the revision and repeal of laws that discriminate against men and women; and
 - To lobby and advocate for equal opportunity legislation.

2. Promote gender equity and the transformation of societal norms and cultural practices of masculinity and femininity by:

- Promoting the critical role of the media in advancing gender equity;
- Supporting community-based initiatives geared to strengthening gender relations;
- Encouraging programmes that help boys form positive notions of gender relations and of themselves;
- Promoting and supporting rights of passage programmes and mentorship programmes for teen boys and girls designed to help with character formation and to instill values relating to gender equality;
- Developing and supporting community-based initiatives that address all forms of gender based violence;
- Promoting the principle of gender equality such that it becomes a life organizing principle for young people.

3. To advocate equal access to educational opportunities by:

- Supporting school based and community based initiatives that promote academic achievement of boys and young men;
- Advocating for quality education of teen mothers and pregnant girls; and
- Advocating for greater representation of girls in science and technology.

4. To promote skills and vocational training as a means of reducing female poverty, and dependence by:

- Expanding and promoting vocational skills training at the community level; and
 - Support initiatives to promote entrepreneurship among young women and develop a support network for young female entrepreneurs.
- 5. To foster a culture supportive of women's role in decision making at the national level:**
- To open up spaces for young women to take part in decision making at the national level, by their representation on statutory boards, committees, councils and in the Diplomatic Corps.
 - To provide a forum for young women to discuss issues relative to their status in society and their contribution to national development.
 - Support initiatives by NGOs and CBOs geared at developing leadership skills in young women.
- 6. To foster a culture of sexual responsibility amongst young people, and to promote fidelity as a cultural value by:**
- Promoting the understanding among young women that they have the right and a responsibility to themselves to ensure their sexual and reproductive health;
 - Advocating sexual and reproductive rights as a means to advancing women's socio-economic status;

- Advocating for the revision of laws that contravene women's reproductive rights;
- Supporting programmes that educate young women about their reproductive and sexual health, and provide services relative to their care;
- Supporting programmes that educate young men about their sexual and reproductive health and that of women;
- Supporting programmes and initiatives geared towards encouraging boys and young men to foster the idea of partnership and mutually supportive relations with women, with special attention on HIV prevention and responsible parenthood;
- Promoting programmes that allow young men and women to explore issues relating to relationship and power together; and
- Supporting and implementing programmes that promote fidelity as a cultural value and ideal.

STRATEGIES FOR INTERVENTION

- Education for teen mothers as a right--- legislation/policy
- Legislative reform (child/sexual abuse; prostitution; domestic violence, abortion)
- Equal employment opportunities and training
- Study on status of young women in Antigua & Barbuda
- Study of risk and protective factors implicated in academic success of boys/young men
- Mentoring programmes for young men and young women.

Major Partner Agencies

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports
Ministry of Education
Directorate of Gender Affairs
Ministry of Justice & Legal Affairs
Ministry of Labour
Ministry of Social Transformation
Business Sector
AIDS Secretariat
Media

Implementation of the National Youth Policy

Implementation of the National Youth Policy will require a national approach. All Stake holders - Government, Business sector, non-governmental and community based organizations, the faith community, youth organizations and young people themselves must take ownership of and responsibility for the realization of the vision set out in this Policy.

National oversight of the implementation of the Policy will be the responsibility of the Department of Youth Affairs. Consequently, DYA shall facilitate the monitoring of various programmes as articulated in the National Youth Policy, including playing an advocacy role. Additionally, the DYA will encourage all youth development partners to align their programmes and services to the vision, strategic objectives and the positive model of youth development outlined in the Policy. Further, the DYA will facilitate professional training of youth workers both for Government, relevant NGO's, and Youth organisations in an effort to build capacity and support the successful implementation of the Policy.

The DYA will facilitate the formation of a National Youth Development Steering Committee comprising youth, critical government ministries and agencies and representative youth development organizations. This committee will have responsibility for:

- Facilitating the design of the NYDS (National Youth Development Strategy)
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation process;

- Fostering coordination and collaboration among the stakeholders, and;
- Advocating for resources needed to implement the Policy.

This National Youth Development Steering Committee will be responsible to the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Budgetary and Technical Support

There needs to be a huge leadership and resource push to drive this policy. A portion of the national budget must be apportioned for Policy support. The Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs must also be adequately staffed and resourced in order to implement the Policy.

The Department of Youth Affairs will facilitate the production of a training manual that incorporates a guide to good practice for stakeholders to maximize their contributions towards the realization of policy goals.

Youth Mainstreaming

The National Youth Policy needs to be seen and understood within the context of the National Development Strategic Plan, and other government strategies. Further, youth development must be seen as critical to national development and the Policy goals be linked to each ministry's key performance indicators.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation process presents an excellent opportunity for government to liaise closely with stakeholders to ensure that goals remain relevant to the circumstances of young people. The National Youth Policy shall be reviewed every five years; a process that should occur simultaneously with the NYDS. The review will examine progress made in achieving the indicators defined by the Plan of Action.

POLICY SUCCESS DEPENDS ON:

- Advocacy on behalf of young people
- A supportive policy environment and specific supporting policies addressing their needs and rights
- The quality and scope of programmes
- Trained and committed Youth Development Professionals
- Strong youth participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes
- Effective monitoring of progress and committed resources
- Strong collaborative networks

Appendix I National Task Force

Organization	Representatives
AIDS Secretariat	Jean Machel Benn-BuDois
ALP Youth Arm	Latoya Lake
Anglican Young Peoples Association	Tristan Browne
Antigua State College (student)	Brett Christopher
Antigua State College (lecturer)	Gregson James
Antigua & Barbuda Employers Federation	Acres Stowe
Antigua & Barbuda Media Congress	Colin James
Antigua & Barbuda Police Force	Corporal Sharon Joseph
Antigua & Barbuda Union of Teachers	Gregson James
Association for Persons with Disabilities	Bernard Warner
Barbuda Council	Fabian Jones
Barbuda youth	Brett Parker
Barbuda Youth Office	Mrs. Judith Harris
Boys Training School	Partick Byrne
CARICOM Youth Ambassador	Cleveroy Thomas
Commonwealth RYC	Kareem Pay
Drug Information Unit	Norma Jeffrey-Dorsett
Duke of Edingburg Programme	Kelisa Hunte
Friends Hotline	John Cole
Gender Affairs	Sheila Roseau
Gender Affairs	Nana Hesse
Girl Guides	Jellette Bowen
Girl Guides	Carolyn Mc.Coy (Commissioner)
Hero International	Boris Emmanuel
Junior Cabinet (youth radio programme)	Slyvyn Farell
Advisor-juvenile justice	Jeannette Charles
Independent	Sandra Jonas
Independent	Ivor Forde
Youth observer (audit)	Colin Jerome
Ministry of Education	Phillip Lloyd
Ministry of Health	Earleen Baptiste
Ministry of Information	Tracelyn Cornelius

Ministry of Labour	Arica Thomas
Ministry of Social Improvement	Brenda Thomas
Ministry of Youth Affairs	Cleon Athill
Ministry of Youth Affairs	Sophia Zachariah
Ministry of Youth Affairs	Stephen Samuel
Ministry of Youth Affairs	Desiree Weston
Ministry of Youth Affairs	Dale O'Brien
Rasta community	Kiyode Straker
School Counselling	Daryl Josiah
Sports Department	Mervyn Richards

Staff of the Department of Youth Affairs

Cleon Athill	Director of Youth Affairs
Jessica Prince	Secretary
Sophia Roach- Zachariah	Programme Officer
Dale O'Brien	"
Stephen Samuels	"
Desiree Weston-Williams	"
Devorah Simmons	Youth Officer
Judith Archibald	"
Guerin Hunte	"
Josain Butler	"
Norville Simon	"
Dwight Watkins	"
Alana Abbott	"

Appendix II List of Organizations Consulted

4-H
ABAFY
ABICE
AIDS Secretariat
All Saints Secondary School PTA
Alp Youth Arm
Anglican Youth Office
Antigua Christian Council
Antigua Family Planning Affiliation
Antigua State College
Antigua & Barbuda Association for Persons with Disabilities
Antigua & Barbuda Employers Federation
Antigua & Barbuda Family Planning
Antigua & Barbuda Media Congress
Antigua & Barbuda Union of Teachers
Anglican Young Peoples' Association
Barbuda Council
Barbuda Community
Bolans Community Group
Cadet Corps
Caribbean Family Planning Association
CARICOM Youth Ambassadors
Clare Hall Christian Union Group
Cedar Grove School
Christian Faith Academy
Christ the King High School
Church of God of Prophecy, Clare Hall
Church of God of Prophecy, Johnsons
Citizens Welfare Division
Community Development
Commonwealth Youth Ambassadors
DARE
Directorate of Gender Affairs
Drug Education & Information Unit

Duke of Edingburg
Early Childhood Education Centre
Freetown Connection
Friends Hotline
Girl Guides-Antigua
Government Information Service (GIS)
Hero International
Junior Cabinet
National Training Agency
Nazarene Youth Caravan
Nazarene Youth International
Ottos Comprehensive School Young leaders Group
Optimist
Peace Corps
Pentecostal Crusaders
Professional Organization of Women of Antigua & Barbuda
Project Hope
Potters Under Nineteen Soccer team
POWA
Rastafari Community
Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities
Rotoract
Royal Police Force of Antigua & Barbuda
Schools' Truancy Unit
Seven Day Adventist Pathfinders
Spanish Youth
St. Josephs Academy
St. Paul's Young Adult Group
Welfare Department
Youth Parliament

Appendix III List of Government Agencies

Ministry of Health
Ministry of Social Transformation
Ministry of Planning
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Labour
Boys Training School
Citizens Welfare Division
Department of Culture
Directorate of Gender Affairs
Drug Education & Information Unit
Early Childhood Education
Establishment Department
Government Information Service (GIS)
Probation Department
Social & Economic Planning Unit

Appendix IV List of International Organizations Consulted

UNICEF
CYPCC
CYP Sec.
CARICOM
CFPA
UNESCO

Appendix V List of Individuals Consulted

Ambassador Ruppert Blaize
Ambassador Joan Underwood
George & Bernadette Imhoff
Orna David
Omya David
Craig Tuckett
Agnes Blaize
David Clarke (Advisor to the Minister)
Jeanette Charles (Advisor to Minister, Juvenile rehabilitation & Justice)
Dr. Marcus Mottley (Clinical Psychologist & Human Resource Development Consultant)
Derek Alleyne (Youth development consultant, Barbados)
Richard Carter (Youth Director, Barbados)
Betty Johnson, US Peace Corps Volunteer

Appendix VI List of Media Houses

ABS Radio & Television
Antigua Sun
Crusader Radio
Daily Observer
Family Radio
Gem
GIS
Observer Radio
Red Hot Flames
Sun FM
ZDK

The Policy Formulation Process

The National Youth Policy Formulation process started with an important preliminary activity in November 2005. Over 100 stakeholders representing diverse interest took part in a youth development workshop. Here, a number of issues were identified; chief amongst them were the lack of opportunities for youth involvement, youth health issues, educating today's youth to meet the challenges and equipping youth development workers to respond in efficient manner. These would provide guidance for the for the policy development.

In January 2006, the members of various stakeholder groups were invited to be part of the National Youth Policy Task Force. The response was encouraging. The Department of Youth Affairs approached CYP to provide technical assistance in this initial stage. Mr. Richard Carter, Director of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs, Barbados, conducted an orientation exercise on behalf of CYP. Mr. Carter outlined the purpose of a national youth policy and underlined the significance of the Policy process being "national, inclusive and participatory".

In a subsequent meeting members of the Task Force discussed emerging issues as well as expressed a strong desire to have the political directorate recognize the process and the Task Force, and to make a statement regarding support of the process. Further, it was felt that letters of appointment should be issued by the government, to signal its commitment.

In February 2006, 43 individuals representing various youth organizations, NGOs and government agencies were officially appointed to the Task Force by the Prime Minister, Hon. W. Baldwin Spencer. Hon. Winston Williams, Minister of State with responsibility for youth development, highlighted the importance of the task ahead and urged the Task Force to stay focused. Sir Edward Carrington, Secretary General of CARICOM, was present at this short ceremony. In the meeting that followed, the Task Force elected its executive and agreed on a work plan and time line. It was agreed that meetings will be held weekly.

Executive:

President	Cleon Athill, Director of Youth Affairs
Vice president	Kareem Payne, Commonwealth Youth Caucus Rep
Secretary	Earlene Baptiste, Ministry of Health

Asst. Secretary	PC. Sharon Roberts, Royal Police Force of Antigua & Barbuda
Asst. Secretary	Brenda Thomas, Ministry of Social Transformation
PRO team	Cleveroy Thomas, CARICOM Youth Ambassador
	Boris Emmanuel, Hero Int'l
	Sylvin Farrell, Youth Parliament

The Task Force then entered the consultation phase. Community consultations were conducted in St Pauls and All Saints (at the All Saints Parish Hall), St Phillips at Willikies (at St. Marks Anglican Church), St Johns East (at Clare Hall School), St Johns Proper (at Multipurpose Cultural Centre), St Georges (at Cedar Grove Primary School) and Barbuda (at the Council Building). Unfortunately, the consultation scheduled for the South Zone did not materialize. There was also a final national consultation at the Multipurpose Cultural Centre.

The consultations which were facilitated primarily by young people were formatted to maximize the input of participants. Generally, presentations relating to the critical issues were made, followed by lively interaction from the participants. For the final National Consultation presentations summated the discussions and concerns of previous consultations. Participants then had the opportunity to refine the issues.

The National Youth Policy process piggybacked on other consultations conducted by other sectors. These included the Ministry of Education Student Forum and the OECS Consultation on School Violence and Discipline, as well as the national consultation on the OECS Model Education Bill, the Department of Youth Affairs Teen AIDS Forum, and consultations conducted by the Ministry of Finance.

In addition to the public consultations, there were also media consultations. Public discussions took place on the air waves via the radio and television stations. The document as it developed was widely circulated via the internet and suggestions and comments were forwarded via the same means. Feed back via the internet came from Antiguan and Barbudans in the State as well as those aboard. There were also a few written submissions.

In July 2006, CYP provided technical support for the next phase of the Policy process. CYP Programme Officer, Ms. Dwynette Eversley, facilitated a strategic planning session at the Jolly Beach Resort. Over seventy participants representing a wide cross section of organizations took part in this activity. The purpose of this activity was to align the Policy vision, goals and with the strategic objectives as well as to

build consensus as regards the reliability of the process thus far and to explore implementation issues.

The final phase was the document refining stage. Here it was critical to involve persons who were not intimately involved in the process. Consequently, Ms. Verlyn Faustin, a young legal luminary, was co-opted to sit on a sub committee that would have responsibility for the final document.

Successes of the Policy process

1. The involvement of a wide cross section of young people and their youth organizations at all levels and all phases of the process.
2. The involvement of the wide cross section of the society to include youth organizations, community based organizations and non-government organizations, civil and corporate society.
3. The use of the internet to create awareness and elicit feedback.
4. The involvement and empowering of marginalized groups of young people, particularly persons with disability.
5. The involvement of persons across the political divide and that fact that the process was not influenced by the present political directorate.

Limitations of and problems encountered during the process:

The Department of Youth Affairs and the National Youth Policy Task Force recognizing that in order for the policy process to be meaningful and empowering activity, it had to be inclusive and engaging. Consequently, consultative approach was deemed most appropriate.

However, as the process started it was discovered that many persons were unfamiliar and uncomfortable interacting this way. This affected turn out at consultations early in the process. Additionally, many persons expressed the view that such consultations seem not to yield tangible results and were not willing to expend the time.

Notwithstanding this initial unease, there was a steady increase in interest and momentum and the numbers grew significantly by the end of the consultation phase.

**NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP
JULY 06, 2006, JOLLY BEACH RESORT, ST JOHN'S ANTIGUA**

TIME	ACTIVITY	PRIMARY OUTPUT(S)
0900	Opening & Administration	
9:15 – 9:45	Review of National Youth Policy Paper - Interrogation of rationale, context & formulation of NYP of A&B	Ratification and consensus on process for developing NYP
9:45 – 11:00 AM	Review and affirm main NYP principles and vision Interrogate main strategies for achieving vision for youth of Antigua and Barbuda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Education, Health, employment, gender relations, crime and violence, youth protection, youth participation 	Consensus on vision of the youth in A&B. Consensus on the 4 top SMART strategies required to realise the vision
11:00 – 11:15 AM	BREAK	
11:15 – 13:00 PM	GROUP WORK Interrogate main strategies for achieving vision for youth of Antigua and Barbuda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ -Education, Health, employment, gender relations, crime and violence, youth protection, youth participation ▪ 	Group Reports Strategies cross-referenced with National Youth Agenda for cross-cutting themes and implementation profile Implementation Outline
13:00 – 14:00 PM	LUNCH	
14:00 – 15:30 PM	GROUP WORK Implementation planning Transforming strategies into programmes Identifying main responsibilities of stakeholders for implementation. Assessment of resources and capacity necessary for implementation. How to mobilize resources? How to assess performance?	Key programmes A matrix of responsibilities Milestones for accountability, monitoring and evaluation
15:30 – 15:45	BREAK	
15:45 – 16:45	GROUP WORK Drafting the Implementation Schedule Costing key programmes and strategies Budget	Implementation Schedule Budget Next steps identified



Ministry of Health, Sports & Youth Affairs

Antigua & Barbuda National Youth Policy Task Force

National Youth Policy

Consultation Questionnaire

(For purposes of this Youth policy, Youth covers age range 0-35)

Our National Youth Policy is about creating spaces for our young people, providing opportunities for their involvement and supporting their individual and collective development.

Consultations with young people and other stakeholders have revealed a number of areas that should be given top priority for national youth development

Please show how you would prioritize these areas, with 1 showing top priority and 7 least priority, Also show your concern for these areas---‘very concerned’, ‘somewhat concerned’, ‘not concerned’ and ‘do not care’.

1

1 -7	Priority Areas	Very Concerned	Some Concerned	Not Concerned	Don't Care
	Health				
	Education				
	Crime and Violence				
	Gender relations				
	Employment				
	Youth Participation				
	Youth Protection				



(National Priority Areas for Youth Development)

2. For the three top areas you chose above, say what are your major concerns and how these might be addressed

Areas	Major Concern	Strategy

1. From the list below, rank the things that young people need for them to develop and contribute meaningfully to the society? 1 most important, 5 least important

Education..... Good family..... Safe community.....
 Opportunities. ..Supportive friends.. Other.....

2. Some goals or outcomes for youth development: Do you agree?  
- a. To equip them with life skills
 - b. To prepare them for adult life
 - c. To keep them out of trouble
 - d. To have them contribute to the country
 - e. To develop strong, and caring individuals

3. How might young people be assisted in order for them to develop the way you Agreed to above? Tick the ways ✓
- 1. Better education.....
 - 2. After school programmes
 - 3. More discipline.....
 - 4. Counseling programmes.....
 - 5. Support for parents.....
 - 5. Sporting programmes.....
 - 6. Boot camps.....
 - 7. Involvement in club and youth groups...

8..... 9.

4. What is the responsibility of the country to its young people?
.....
.....

5. What is the responsibility of the young people to the country?
.....
.....

6. Below are some values that as a community we can instill in our young people?
Which three are most important? ♡
Respect ♡ Teamwork ♡ Tolerance ♡
Hard work ♡ Discipline ♡ Responsibility ♡
Spirituality ♡ other.....

7. Who in the community should instill there values??
Parents..... Teachers..... Church.....
All adults..... Media.....

b. How might they do this?.....
.....

8. Are there any special programmes that the community and government can implement to make a real difference in the lives of young people?
A. Government.....
.....
B. Community.....
.....
C. You.....

9. Please indicate your age group

- Below 12 yrs.....
- 12 – 17 yrs
- 18 – 29 yrs.....
- 30 – 35 yrs
- 35 – 45 yrs.....
- 45- 55 yrs
- Over 55yrs.....

Thank you

