Findings of a Study on Risks, Threats, Resilience and School Bonding Factors in 5 Caricom Countries

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Regional Forum on Youth Crime & Violence:
Youth crime and violence – Breaking the cycle exploring new platforms for transformation
Context

Literature shows...

– Escalation of violence in schools
– Crime and violence instill fear
– Availability or perceived ready access to drugs/ firearms
– Studies have focused on assessing one factor at a time
– Violence in schools has long-term community impact

*NEW – Assessing all factors together

Period of Assessment: April – August 2014

• Theory Context:
  – Resiliency, Social Control, Social Cognitive, Strain, and Social Disorganization
**METHODOLOGY**

**Population**
- 5 schools/communities
- High Risk school and community

**Sample**
- 10% of the student population by gender and grade (sample of teachers and students)

**Data Collection** (past 12mths)
- 51 Itemed questionnaire compiled from a number of sources

**Data Analysis**
- SPSS
- Content Analysis
- Factor loadings
- Assessed reliability
FINDINGS
## Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>n/Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender n=475</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>229/48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>246/51.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity n=485</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>336/69.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>105/21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>18/3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>26/5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age n=498</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-13</td>
<td>122/24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-16</td>
<td>327/65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>49/9.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Reasons for Violence

- Easy access to drugs and guns, 40.0%
- Gang members moving to your school/community, 20.0%
- Problems in school/Boredom, 10.0%
- Need to feel love and belonging, 10.0%
- Other, 10.0%
- Poverty, 10.0%
Most frequently Occurring Types of Violence and Participation

Most Frequently Occurring Participation
Witnessing Vs. Reporting

Witnessing

Reporting
Findings: Gangs in School

Reported that in the last 12 months, students thought...

**Negative**

- 69.7% Gangs were a problem in their school \[n=485\]
- 60.4% Knew which members of their school joined gangs \[n=475\]
- 69.2% Been able to list 5 or more incidents of gang in their school \[n=474\]
- 59.8% Knew when and where most gangs hang out \[n=468\]
- 54.3% Were afraid of being a victim of fight or violence \[n=466\]
- 61.7% Wanted to leave school to go to another school \[n=481\]
- 62.1% Had teachers/adults in their school insult you, put you down, or humiliate them \[n=472\]
Community & Student Findings

Themes from community

1) Not enough activities for children
2) Increase in crime and violence in their community

Reasons:
1) Balance of duties as parents to care and nurture their children with the need to be the breadwinner of the family.
2) Unrest in the community that changed from years past. ‘bring back our community’.

Themes from students

1) Wanted to leave their school to go to another
2) Do not feel engaged – lack of programming across school for all students
3) Concerns of victimization and safety calling for more community presence
4) and ensuring that any effort made be done to impact all not only some good students.
Summary of Findings

- All schools showing **above average risk and threats**
- Evidence of **some social controls and aspects of protection against risk (school bonding and protective)**
- Evidence of **impact not reaching all students**
  - Many students want to leave and do not feel engaged
  - Lack of programming a concern across all schools
  - Victimization and safety also a huge concern
- Students experienced increased levels of threat and risk factors in 12mth
- Students reported 2-3 times more activities characterized as threat and risk factors annually
- Protective (2.83) and school bonding factors (3.04) reverse scored - students having 2-3x more experiences with protective and school bonding factors in a 12-month period.
- 4 factors 2+ and 2- States showing above average increased levels of severity for risk and threats and strong measures of intense social controls for protective and school bonding factors.
Strategies for Preventing Violence

- Mentoring programs for students, 16.7%
- Parenting training, 16.7%
- Recreation/after school programs, 16.7%
- Police presence in school, 41.7%
- More involvement of faith-based organizations, 0%
- Other, 8.3%

Gang Prevention Programmes, 0
Social Services, 0
Recommendations

• Recognize school environment as direct impact on lives of students’
• Must campaign against out-of-school deterrence for violence
• Reduce risk and threat factors in the school and community
• Increase number of bonding and protective programs for all students
  – E.g. relationship education, life coaching, taking responsibility, life skills
• Use data to draft a strategic plan for response in training, programming, mentoring, parenting partnerships and more.