FOCUS ASSESSMENT STUDY IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN GRENADA 2003

Assessing marijuana use and related behavioural patterns among young people

Submitted by:
Dianne A. Roberts
RECORDS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The escalation of drug abuse over the last three to four decades, particularly among adolescents and young people, has created major public health and socioeconomic problems and challenges (CAREC, 2001). These challenges are significantly deterring the capacity of developing nations to maintain positive growth and development. It is therefore critical that effective and appropriate interventions are developed and implemented to curb present and future drug related problems. Such interventions must be based on a thorough understanding of the patterns of drug use, and resultant challenges from the perspective of the affected population.

The launch of the Caribbean Drug Information Network (CARIDIN) in Trinidad during 2001 represented a significant milestone for the region in its efforts to manage drug abuse and associated problems. The Project, funded by the European Commission in collaboration with the UNODC and the OAS/CICAD is principally designed to strengthen the capacity of CARIFORUM governments, technical entities and communities to more effectively respond to the changing drug use patterns and trends, and to contribute to the abatement of drug abuse in the region. Under the framework of the Project, the UNODC is contracted to assist member states to implement focus assessment research studies. The purpose of these studies is to explore drug use and interrelated problems among vulnerable and hard to reach populations, and to enhance the capacity of countries to conduct qualitative research.

Grenada is benefiting from the above funded Project to conduct a focus assessment study in four selected communities. The study implemented in two rural (Tivoli and Gouyave) and two urban (River Road and Woburn) communities by the Drug Control Secretariat is designed to better understand marijuana use among out of school youth between the ages of 13-19 years. The principal objectives of the research are as follows:

i. To investigate the perception of marijuana use among out of school youths;

ii. To identify factors which influence the use of marijuana by young people;

iii. To determine the perceptions and behaviours of out-of-school youth, and risk behaviours including their views and needs towards existing drug prevention practices; and

iv. To determine the perception of the target audience about crime in the community in relation to marijuana drug use.

The study conducted in two rural (Tivoli and Gouyave) and two urban (River Road and Woburn) communities employed a qualitative research paradigm due to its exploratory nature. Specifically, the principal data collection strategies included focus group discussions, key informant interviews and content analysis of secondary data. It is the goal of the implementing agency that this study would provide the information needed to
develop effective and appropriate interventions to reduce the incidence of marijuana use and interrelated problems among the target group.

Moreover, the current environment that exists within the four target communities is not fully conducive for the prevention of marijuana among out of school youths. Three major factors are hindering out of school youths from effectively resisting marijuana use in rural and urban communities. These include:

- Misinformation or lack of knowledge on the impacts of marijuana on human health;
- An unsupportive socio-cultural environment in which the target group resides. In particular, high levels of poverty and unemployment; limited and/or no parental guidance and emotional support; limited involvement of the community in youth development and promotion of social norms that are inconsistent with prevention of marijuana use;
- Inadequate law enforcement at both national and community levels.

To augment youth’s resilience to resist marijuana use, a five year Action Plan incorporating public awareness and education; improvement of the socio-cultural environment and augmentation of national capacity for demand control is proposed. Key objectives of the Plan include:

- Promote broad base support for primary prevention of marijuana use among the target group;
- Develop and implement initiatives that would improve the socioeconomic status of the target group;
- Encourage the development of a supportive social and cultural environment to meet the physical, social, spiritual and psychological needs of the out of school youth.

In an effort to ensure effective implementation of the above objectives, an evaluation plan should be developed at the onset of implementation. Similarly, a number of tactics have been proposed as listed below considering the socio-cultural profile of the out-of-school youth.

- Interventions, particularly the ones that would impact the youth directly should be developed and implemented in collaboration with the out of school youth.
- Public awareness events should use media that have been proven to reach the youth;
Sustainability and continuity of programs are very critical in achieving the challenging task of subverting marijuana use and associated risky behaviours among youth. There is need therefore to identify resources and funding to sustain meaningful programmes to foster behavioural modification consistent with HIV/AIDS and drug use prevention.

Messages disseminated should be clear, consistent and factual.

The out of school youth should be treated with respect and professionalism at all times.

Knowledge and empowerment, rather than fear should be the central guiding principle of the action plan.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| CAREC | Caribbean Epidemiology Centre |
| CARIDIN | Caribbean Drug Information Network |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| CICAD | Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission |
| CARIFORUM | Caribbean Forum of the ACP States |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The escalation of drug abuse over the last three to four decades, particularly among adolescents and young people, has created major public health and socioeconomic problems and challenges (CAREC, 2001). These challenges are significantly deterring the capacity of developing nations to maintain positive growth and development. It is therefore critical that effective and appropriate interventions are developed and implemented to curb present and future drug related problems. Such interventions must be based on a thorough understanding of the patterns of drug use, and resultant challenges from the perspective of the affected population.

The launch of the Caribbean Drug Information Network (CARIDIN) in Trinidad during 2001 represented a significant milestone for the region in its efforts to manage drug abuse and associated challenges. The Project, funded by the European Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the OAS/CICAD, is principally designed to strengthen the capacity of CARIFORUM governments, technical entities and communities to more effectively respond to the changing drug use patterns and trends, and to contribute to the abatement of drug abuse in the region. Under the framework of the Project, the UNODC is contracted to assist member states to implement focus assessment research studies. The purpose of these studies is to explore drug use and interrelated problems among vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations, and to enhance the capacity of countries to conduct qualitative research.

Grenada is benefiting from the above funded Project to conduct a focus assessment study in four selected communities. The study, implemented in two rural (Tivoli and Gouyave) and two urban (River Road and Woburn) communities by the Drug Control Secretariat is designed to better understand marijuana use among out-of-school youth between the ages of 13 - 19 years. The principal objectives of the research are as follows:

i. To investigate the perception of marijuana use among out of school youths;

ii. To identify factors which influence the use of marijuana by young people;

iii. To determine the perceptions and behaviours of out-of-school youth, and risk behaviours including their views and needs towards existing drug prevention practices; and

iv. To determine the perception of the target audience about crime in the community in relation to marijuana use.

It is anticipated that the study will unearth critical information that can be used to develop a strategy for reducing the incidence of marijuana use among the target group.
1.1 NATIONAL CONTEXT

1.1.1 Geographical Position

Grenada, part of a tri-island state (Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique), is the southernmost windward island in the Eastern Caribbean. The island group located at 12° N latitude and 61° W longitude covers approximately 344 square kilometers, with Grenada amassing an area of 307 square kilometers or 89% of the total island group.

1.1.2 Socio - Economic Conditions

1.1.2.1 Economy

The economic fortunes of Grenada have been linked to the performance of the agriculture industry. However, a number of internal problems,\(^1\) exacerbated by the removal of preferential treatment of Grenada’s bananas on the international market, negatively affected the industry during the 1980s – 1990s. The Government of Grenada’s new policy initiatives in agricultural diversification and food security are currently aiding the resuscitation of the industry.

The economy of Grenada is presently based on a diverse service sector\(^2\), agriculture, light manufacturing industries and construction. The productive and service sectors are currently competing with agriculture for income, employment and output.

Grenada is a small open economy vulnerable to external shocks and natural disasters. The decreased growth performance of 3.4% and 0.5% during 2001 and 2002 respectively is indicative of this vulnerability. This growth pattern limits efforts towards capacity building and institutional strengthening designed to promote and facilitate a more effective framework for environmental management (Thomas, 2003).

1.1.2.2 Poverty assessment

A national poverty assessment survey conducted by Kairi Consultants in 1998 estimated that 32.1% of all individuals in Grenada were poor, in that their annual expenditure was less than EC$3,362, the cost of meeting their minimal food and other requirements. Additionally, 12.9% of all individuals were found to be extremely poor or indigent. Other key features of national poverty highlighted in the report (Kairi, 1999) included the following:

- Poverty is seriously affecting young people, with over 56% of the poor being less than 25 years old;

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\(^1\) Internal problems included poor quality, low productivity, Moko disease, drought, inadequate marketing and local funding opportunities.

\(^2\) The services sector is defined as wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, transport and communication, financial and business services and other services (MTESP, 2002).
Poverty was distributed almost evenly throughout the country, with the highest levels being found in St. Patrick’s (35.4%), St. George’s (34.4%), St. Marks (33.5%) and St. Andrew’s (32.9).

A higher unemployment rate was found among the poor (20%) compared to the non-poor (13%). Moreover, the poor tended to be concentrated in elementary occupations.

Approximately 64% of the population had no form of educational certification. The country had a limited human capital stock, as represented by the level of education attained by the majority of the population.

1.1.2.3 Employment

National unemployment rates decreased from 20% in 1996 to 12% in 2000 (Ministry of Finance, 2002). Increase in the level of economic activity in the construction, manufacturing, tourism, offshore financial services and telecommunication sectors were largely responsible for these trends. Nevertheless, unemployment figures increased during 2001 as a result of the negative growth experience. There is no current data on unemployment for the period 2002 - 2003.

1.1.2.4 Population

The preliminary results of the 2001 census reported that the population was 102,632 which represents an increase of 7.4% of the 1991 population. It was fairly evenly distributed along gender lines, 50% males and 50% females. Age distribution showed that 47% were less than 20 years old, and 16% were 50 years and over.

Data on the age profile from the 2001 census was not yet available. The age profile in the 1991 census showed a very young population, with 40% below the average age of 15; 31% in the reproductive ages of 15-45; and 37% in the economically active ages of 15 – 60.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Drug Control Secretariat, possession of marijuana is the main drug offence committed in Grenada during the period 1988 – 2002. Four thousand, five hundred and twenty six (4,526) persons were arrested and charged for drug related offences during that period. Specifically, 3,315 (73.2%) were arrested for possession of marijuana, and 245 (5.4%) were arrested for cultivation of the illicit substance. Statistics also revealed that 511 persons (446 males and 65 females) under the age of twenty were arrested and charged for drug offences during the fourteen year period, accounting for 11% of total arrests as illustrated in Figure 1.
Figure 1: Pie chart showing age range of persons arrested and charged for drug related offences during the period 1988 - 2002

![Pie chart showing age range of persons arrested and charged for drug related offences during the period 1988 - 2002](image)

The Secretariat also reported that 4% (51 persons) of the total number of persons sent to prison for drug related offenses (1,235) during 1988 - 2002 were in the age range of 15 - 19 years as shown by Figure 2.

Figure 2: Pie chart depicting the age range of persons sent to prison for drug related offenses during 1988 - 2002

![Pie chart depicting the age range of persons sent to prison for drug related offenses during 1988 - 2002](image)

The seizure of marijuana by the law enforcement officials was also significant. Approximately 251,292 marijuana trees, 20,335 marijuana cigarettes, and 8,369 kilograms of marijuana were seized by officials between 1988 and 2002.

Meanwhile, 882 patients were admitted to the Carlton House Treatment Centre for drug induced medical problems during the above mentioned time span. Nine percent (9%) of these patients were admitted for problems associated with marijuana use only. A significant percent of patients were admitted for poly-drug use. Marijuana was undoubtedly one of the drugs used.
According to the Secretariat’s statistical report (2002), during the past five years, there have been several incidents where students of both primary and secondary school were arrested for the possession of marijuana.

In the study “Evaluation of psychoactive substance use among 14 - 20 year old adolescents in secondary schools in Grenada. Ad analysis of selected influencing factors in Urban-rural comparison 2000-2001,” a comparison between schools of urban and rural locations was conducted. Prevalence rates were contrasted and variables determined regarding age and gender as influencing factors for consumption as well as the influence of socio-economic and demographic factors in the context of family structure, social setting, school, peer influences and health awareness.

For the lifetime prevalence of marijuana, 19.1% of the boys and 9.3% of the girls reported consumption at some point in their lifetime. Gender specific comparison for urban and rural sub populations for the twelve months period showed a risk for alcohol consumption for girls that was statistically significantly lower and for marijuana consumption a lower risk for females in the rural subpopulation. Female students in urban populations were introduced to all substances for the first time at a lower age than the rural female students. Concerning the consumption behaviour for the other substances, male students showed no significant variation, although an earlier age onset was reported in the urban group.

Research conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Grenada during 2002 among in-school and out-of-school youths between the age of 14 – 24 revealed that marijuana was the drug of choice for young persons age 14 and upwards in Grenada (UNODC, 2002).

The above statistics clearly indicate that young people under that age of twenty are becoming involved in the use, abuse and possession of marijuana.

1.3 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is organized into five sections.

Section 1 provided an overview of the study and its context. This included Grenada’s geographical position, its socio-economic status and an overview of marijuana use and arrests during a fourteen-year period.

Section 2 presents the study’s research protocol.

Section 3 summarizes the findings of the study. Specifically, results of the self administered questionnaire, focus group discussion, community key and national informant interviews are presented.

Section 4 highlights the main findings of the study. Explicit reference is made to the distinguishing characteristics of the drug problem in rural and urban populations.
Section 5 presents a five year Action Plan for preventing marijuana use among out-of-school youths in both rural and urban populations in Grenada.
2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research used a qualitative approach to assess the perceptions of out-of-school youths between the ages of 13 – 19 years in four selected communities in Grenada regarding marijuana use and its impact on behaviour. Specifically, the study sought to understand the pattern of marijuana use; the major factors influencing use; youths’ perceptions of the link between drug use and risky behaviour; and their views and needs regarding prevention. The research framework facilitates a deeper appreciation of the social and cultural context of respondents’ attitudes and behaviour, necessary components for effective drug control.

2.2 GENERAL RESEARCH STRATEGIES

The research strategies used were focus group discussions in each of the four communities (Refer to Appendix 1 for the research instrument used), interviews with key informants at the community and national levels (Refer to Appendix 2 and 3 for research instruments used), and content analysis of secondary data.

2.2.1 Focus Group Discussion

2.2.1.1 Selection of participants

Participants for the discussion were selected primarily by a Site Supervisor in each community. Supervisors were community members who had a good relationship with the target group. These individuals were recruited by the research consultant with assistance from the Drug Control Secretariat.

The research consultant trained Site Supervisors in each community. Training was very informal, and occurred at various locations in the respective communities, including classrooms, village shops and supervisor’s residences. One Supervisor was trained via the telephone. Training focused on the following areas: Criteria for selecting research subjects, follow up techniques and choosing a location for hosting the discussion.

2.2.1.2 Criteria used by Site Supervisor to select participants

The criteria used for selecting focus groups participants were as follows:

- Males and females between the age of 13 – 19 years;
- Persons who are not attending school;
- If possible, persons representing various socio-economic status;
- A mixture of persons who have used marijuana and who are not using the drug.
2.2.1.3 Location and setting for focus group discussion

The group discussions were held at a variety of locations, including a steel pan house (River Road), under a tree opposite the beach (Gouyave), adjacent a community shop (Woburn) and at a popular hang out spot in the village (Tivoli). In all instances, discussions were conducted in an area that allowed for privacy and confidentiality, and sought to minimize distractions as much as possible.

2.2.1.4 Self administered questionnaire

At the end of each focus group discussion, participants completed a short questionnaire designed to obtain important demographic information (Refer to Appendix 4 for questionnaire used).

2.2.2 Selecting Community and National informants

The Site Supervisor, working in collaboration with the research consultant, selected two key informants from each community. Additionally, the Drug Avoidance Officer attached to the Drug Control Secretariat working in collaboration with the research consultant selected two national informants to participate in the study (Refer to Appendix 5 for a list of informants interviewed). It was believed by the research planners that the professional and/or practical knowledge of these informants were very important in assessing the service demands of the target population.

2.2.3 Pretest

Pretests were conducted to ensure clarity of the questions asked, and to provide general comments for improvement of the research instruments.

Eight out of school youths between the ages of 15 – 19 years from a rural community participated in the pilot focus group discussion. A young resident of that community recruited participants using the criteria as presented previously in Section 2.2.1.2. The discussion took place at the home of one of the participants. No major changes were made to this guide.

The semi-structured guides for the key and national informant were tested on two individuals each. Interviews were conducted at the residence and workplace of the participating persons. The pilot test for three of the four interviews revealed that question five (5) in both instruments was a bit confusing. The question was modified to ensure easier interpretation.
2.2.4 Data Collection and Management

2.2.4.1 Focus group discussions

The research consultant facilitated the focus group discussions. Group discussions were recorded using a mini tape recorder placed in a central non-distractive location. This option was adopted due to the difficulty in writing every comment made during a dynamic group setting, and to avoid the “decidedly nonconversational” pace of the interview that can ensue from failure of the researcher to become immersed\(^3\) in the emerging discussion (Patton, 1998, 137).

2.2.4.2 Interview of community and national informants

The research consultant accompanied by the Drug Avoidance Officer (field worker) conducted the community key informant interviews subsequent to training provided by the Consultant. Training occurred at the Officer’s workplace and focused on the following issues: understanding the research instrument, procedures for conducting the interviews, and strategies for probing.

Interviews of community informants took place at workplaces, places of residence and in a comfortable location in the community.

The researcher conducted the national key informant interviews at the informants’ workplace.

All interviews conducted were taped recorded with a mini recorder as described above.

2.2.4.3 Data management

The research assistant transcribed all data from the tapes used during the focus group and informant interviews in Microsoft Word files on a daily and in some cases a weekly basis. Data from the questionnaire were inputted in a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) file to ensure that it was not lost.

2.3 ANALYSIS

Content analysis was the principal method used to analyze all qualitative data collected. Analysis sought to determine the frequency of topics being discussed and, also the relative importance of the repeated theme in the focus groups discussions and informant interviews.

Data obtained from the self administered questionnaires were analyzed by the use of SPSS to obtain simple frequencies.

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\(^3\) Immersed denotes a conscious effort of the researcher to avoid elements of distractions and focus all attention on understanding the views of the participating individuals.
2.4 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study was limited by a number of factors as discussed below:

- Recruiting out-of-school youths between the ages of 13 and 19 years to participate in the study proved very challenging, since most of these young people were not keen on sharing their experiences, particularly the females. For instance, three attempts were made to conduct the focus group discussions in Tivoli. Although the research subjects confirmed attendance with the site supervisor, only 25% of the participants attended the discussion. After much deliberation, the site supervisor indicated that youths in that community would only take part in such an activity if an outdoor cooking event is organized. This was done, and was very effective in recruiting the target group.

- Similarly, enlisting persons under fifteen years to participate in the discussions was especially difficult. This is because very few individuals within this age range are out of school.

- Community informants were very busy, even on weekends, which made it quite a challenge to secure an appointment for carrying out the interviews.

- Almost all of the site supervisors complained of the difficulty of finding time, apart from their routine daily activities, to seriously mobilize young people to take part in the discussions.

- The election campaign during October and November also impeded progress of data collection, since planned interviews and/or discussions were canceled because of political meetings held in the community.
3.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

3.1 SELF ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE

This section provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the focus group participants. In addition, it briefly assesses participants’ drug consumption behaviour.

A total of thirty two persons participated in the four focus group discussions. As displayed in Figure 3, 4/5 of the research subjects were males (80%) while less only 1/5 were females (24%).

Figure 3: Pie chart showing gender of focus group participants

![Pie chart showing gender of focus group participants]

The majority of respondents as illustrated in Figure 4 were between the ages of 15 – 18 years (78.2%). Approximately 13% were 19 years, while less than 10% of the respondents were between the ages of 13 – 14 years.

Figure 4: Bar chart illustrating age range of participants

![Bar chart illustrating age range of participants]

Figure 5 illustrates the educational level of the focus group participants. Most of the respondents attained a primary level education (46.8%). About one third of participants
attained a secondary level education (34.4%), while less than 20% attended a vocational institution (18.8%).

**Figure 5: Bar chart illustrating educational level of participants**

Approximately two fifths of respondents lived in a single parent household headed by the mother (43.7%), while 18.7% lived with their grandmother as shown in Figure 6. One in every nine persons lived in a nuclear family (9.4%). Similarly, one ninth of participants lived alone, or with other relatives (9.4%). Less than 10% of participants resided with their mother and stepfather or with grandmother and father (6.3% and 3.1% respectively).

**Figure 6: Bar chart illustrating living arrangements of participants**
The majority of participants as indicated in Figure 7 were unemployed (81%), while only 19% were gainfully employed.

Figure 7: Employment status of focus group participants

[Diagram showing employment status with 81% unemployed and 19% employed]

Figure 8 illustrates marijuana usage of focus group participants. One in every six participant indicated that they have used marijuana previously (66%), while 34% stated that they have never used marijuana. Interestingly, participants from Gouyave had the highest prevalence rate for marijuana usage (85%), while those from Tivoli reported the lowest prevalence rate (29%).

Figure 8: Pie chart depicting marijuana usage among participants

[Diagram showing marijuana usage with 66% yes and 34% no]

3.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

3.2.1 Definition of the Term Drug

Two main definitions were proposed for the term drug. Participants from all groups stated that a drug refers to a substance that has medicinal value. Some participants ascribing to this belief noted that misuse of drugs can lead to a number of physiological and psychotic problems.
“The excessive use of it (drugs) could damage the brain. You could do crazy stuff; you get energy, you get hyperactive, you just do crazy things and jump up and down a table [Male participant, Woburn].”

On the other hand, participants from two groups defined a drug as substances that negatively affect human health. In addition, a few participants defined a drug as cocaine. According to participants, cocaine is classified as a drug because it can alter a person’s mental state and promote deviant behaviours such as stealing.

“When people take it (cocaine), you see the kind of reaction they have like stealing, going in people place and break open and things like that [Male participant, Tivoli].”

3.1.2 Perception of Marijuana

Participants were asked whether marijuana could be considered a drug. This section summarizes participants’ principal perceptions of marijuana.

3.1.2.1 Promotes positive attitudes and behaviour

Some participants were of the firm belief that marijuana is not a drug. This is because it relaxes the individual and does not stimulate the type of feelings and/or negative behaviour that cocaine, an accepted drug does.

“I know for a fact that marijuana is not a drug. I smoke marijuana already, enough times and I still smoking it. It makes me feel more free, more relax. I never smoke cocaine but the reaction ah see people smoking cocaine, how they does do, people who smoking marijuana does not do those kinds of things [Male participant, Tivoli].”

Moreover, it was proposed that consumption of marijuana deters young people from becoming involved in criminal and/or other deviant activities. In fact, most participants noted that use of marijuana promotes positive thinking.

“You would think about something else, something beyond the killing point. For instance, I plan to kill Jason, going through the process I get an ounce of weed, I forget Jason. So I go and sit down and smoke my ounce of weed and think about doing something more positive [Male participant, Woburn].”

Similarly, some participants explained that marijuana encourages productive social relationships among young people instead of creating conflict.

“It does join the young people together because everybody could sit down and smoke a joint together, and while you smoking you could come up with ideas. All you go know how to talk about certain things, positive things and all you go just make conversation
instead of quarreling and fighting, you make conversation [Female participant, Gouyave].”

3.1.2.2 Impact of marijuana on human health

Two schools of thought were expressed by respondents regarding the impact of marijuana on human health.

Respondents from both rural and urban communities stated that marijuana is a powerful medicine.

“It has a whole lot of use in marijuana besides smoking. Like you could boil the buds, the stem. When you have a cold it will suck out the cold and you will just find you spitting out the cold until you have no more cold. It also ease the asthma. You could boil the roots and clean you blood” [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Some participants who expressed the above belief stated that many users misuse marijuana with the intent of experiencing pleasurable feelings.

“It is a medicine but they (users) just using it to get high, they using it wrong. They abusing it because everyday they want to smoke it and they en want to live it let it rest, they misusing the marijuana, they en using it in the right way” [Male participant, River Road].”

On the other hand, some participants from another school of thought believed that marijuana is a drug since it can negatively affect human health.

Respondents also reported that the use of marijuana is a bad thing since it can lead to conflict with the legal system.

“It is (marijuana) is a bad thing, the police does charge them and send them in prison and spend 15 years [Male participant, River Road].”

3.1.2.2 Improves socio-economic condition

It was clear that some participants recognized the role of marijuana in improving the socio-economic status of community members, especially those that are underprivileged.

“I could say its good because people that don’t have money and they selling marijuana and they making money to make a living” [Male participant, River Road].”
3.1.3 Marijuana Consumption Patterns

3.1.3.1 Age of initiation

Some Participants stated that there is no standard age to start using marijuana. It was reported, that children who are abandoned by their parents and/or who lack parental guidance can commence smoking at any age due to peer pressure.

“It don’t have a age. Children like stray children will get peer pressure and just start smoking at any age [Male participant, Woburn].”

Based on information provided by participants, out of school youths begin to smoke marijuana as early as nine (9) years or late as nineteen (19) years. Most groups indicated that young people typically first experiment with marijuana between 13 – 14 years. One participant from Tivoli remarked that the age of initiation for marijuana in that community was higher than the average stated above due to fear of confrontation with the legal system.

“The young people don’t start to take it too early around here because it en so legal [Male participant, Tivoli].”

3.1.3.2 Frequency of use

Frequency of smoking marijuana varied from person to person. Notwithstanding this, two groups of smokers were identified based on pattern of use.

Some participants stated that they smoked occasionally, for instance once, twice or three times weekly.

“Well I not in school, and now and then I does take a pull, sometimes twice a week [Male participant, Tivoli].”

A few participants who maintained the above consumption pattern explained that an understanding of the negative effect of varying marijuana concentrations on an individual’s mental health limits frequency of consumption.

“I know when I take it the kind of meditation I does be on. I know my level. I never go beyond my limit. If I know I does smoke two to three spliffs a day, I won’t go and smoke 4 or 5, and I would not smoke one spliff for myself, that is too much for me head. I
smoke half and when I find I cool, I out it and leave it for next time [Male participant, Tivoli].”

On the other hand, some young people smoked continuously during the day, similar to that of a chain smoker.

“Some people actually smoke like every second of the day, every minute, is like a chain smoker. Be time they out one marijuana they find they could have a next one in they mouth. Is like that, and it have young people doing that. They have no control of when they should smoke; they smoke anytime they feel like it [Male participant, Gouyave].”

Chain smoking appeared to be linked with out of school youths, unemployment and interacting in a group environment.

“Some smoke every minute. What they do is they light one joint and pass it around so that would not give you a whole height, so they light about three, four and just continue passing it around, so if they do that for the whole day sometime they smoke like ten joints for the day, they not going to school and they not working so they have a lot of free time [Male participant, Woburn].”

3.1.3.3 Gender and consumption patterns

Some respondents from all groups believed that males were more likely to consume marijuana than females.

“It hardly have girls using marijuana, mainly the males around here (Male participant, Tivoli).”

However, it was expressed by some participants, particularly from Gouyave, River Road and Woburn that both males and females consumed marijuana.

Males are more likely to consume marijuana than females. Notwithstanding this, all communities reported that marijuana is consumed by both sexes. Consumption of marijuana among females appeared to be very minimal in Tivoli while this practice is very prevalent in Gouyave.

3.1.4 Marijuana Induced Behavioral Patterns

Participants were asked to describe the behavioural patterns of young people after consuming marijuana. Respondents indicated that the behaviours varied at the individual level.

“Some quiet, some noisy and some ah them evil [Male participant, River Road].”
This section summarizes respondents’ perception of specific marijuana induced behaviours, including their perceptions and practical experiences of the link between marijuana use and risky behaviour.

3.1.4.1 General behavioural patterns

Rebellious and disobedient

Some participants from River Road and Gouyave noted that teenagers were more likely to be disobedient to their parents after using marijuana.

“Some ah dem evil, when they home and they parents want to send them, they tell they mother no, and they want to give they mother rudeness [Male participant, River Road].”

In addition, participants from both groups commented that marijuana use encouraged teenagers to rebel against authority, especially when interacting with their parents.

“But then as a teenager, it could make you very rebellious because it have times when you smoke and you come home and you mother speaking to you, because of you highness she might be talking to you, she might be wanting to send you but you decide you en going because you high [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Some participants were of the opinion that young people exhibiting these behavioural traits were simply unable to control the marijuana induced feelings.

“So some of these teenagers who cannot control their feelings they getting might get rebellious against their parents and the whole community [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Calm disposition

A number of participants expressed the view that marijuana calms the user and reduces the individual’s responsiveness to external stimuli, both positive and negative.

“They say it makes you crazy and stuff like that but I don’t find so. When I smoke marijuana it keeps me cool, its like a they as if ah don’t they. You might be speaking to me and ah would not answer you; you might be cursing me and ah would not answer you. People might say oh afraid but it’s not that, you just smoke and it calms you down [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Almost all groups indicated that marijuana leads the individual to meditate about life and future possibilities.

Increased energy and heighten mood

Some participants noted that use of marijuana increases their ability to do work, and raises their performance level and general self esteem.
“It have time when you smoke it (marijuana) you feel you could do anything, you could work, you could do any work [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Respondents stated that use of marijuana improves one’s mood. There is an increased tendency to laugh and to appreciate the natural environment. Participants added that persons who have not experienced these feelings would perceive the marijuana user as crazy under these conditions.

“Everything is a joke, then you go look up at the clouds out of the blue and see all kind ah things and that go marvel you and people go say you crazy because you enjoying nature. You enjoying everything out here have to offer, but people go think you crazy because it is not a norm in the community to be looking up at the sky and enjoying nature [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Some participants from Gouyave added that marijuana increases the individual’s urge to sing.

“You know sometimes you might smoke a joint and you sit down for example me and she might not be speaking, and she see me and sometime ah smoke and ah might be singing and she might feel ah singing to her but when I smoke I always get a natural music vibes, it boosts me spirit. I always feel I could write a song [Female participant, Gouyave].”

*Increases appetite:* All groups expressed the viewpoint that marijuana use increases appetite.

“They eat a lot, five to ten chicken wings, and they going up, they still want more [male participant, Woburn].”

*Encourages sleep*

Participants from Tivoli added that marijuana promotes sleep among some users.

3.1.4.2 *Link between marijuana use and risky behaviour*

*Marijuana and violence*

Participants from Gouyave and Woburn were adamant that marijuana use does not encourage violent behaviour among young people.

“Marijuana does just make you chill. For what I see, if my brother smoke he stuff (marijuana) and he come home, somebody provoking him, tugging him, he’ll be like boy behave, leave me alone, and he leave and go in his room, lock up himself in his room to
be by himself, or he prefer to leave and go before he create a problem. If he have he normal head before he talk and tell you behave twice, he knock you out [Male participant, Woburn].”

Some of these participants explained that young people act violently after consuming marijuana because of personal negative thinking. They proposed the thesis that use of marijuana simply promotes personal thoughts and attitudes, whether positive or negative.

“Marijuana don’t make you violent, is up to you as a party. If you is a negative person, and you think negative and violent, that is how marijuana go act on you. But if you think positive, it go act on you positive … It all depends on how you thinking [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Some participants from Woburn elaborated that violence among youths is a result of idleness and lack of education; not marijuana.

“It’s not the marijuana that make you violent, is just the person. Some of them smoking and for scene they want to look for fight, and people go just say is because they smoking that is how come they doing that. It’s not because they smoking, they just looking for scene, they want to create something. It have some stupid young fellers, they have no education and nothing to do, a lot of free time, so they just want something to do to draw attention to themselves [Male participant, Woburn].”

One participant from Woburn explained that some young people smoke to seek attention from their peers. When this strategy fails to produce the desired results, young people act violently to satisfy their need for external confirmation of self. Therefore, violence is really symptomatic of an attention deficit problem.

“No, some of them smoking to get attention, and if they en get the attention from that they go say well okay, let me go and hit somebody, they hit the person they start to fight, and then they say well oh he smoking now he bad. It’s not because he smoking, its just he needs attention [Male participant, Woburn].”

On the other hand, the female participants from Tivoli and some participants from River Road refuted the claim that marijuana does not promote violence among users.

“The feeling they get, sometimes you just sit down they and you feel you on a higher heights than everybody, and as you they on a higher heights you feel you could just beat up everybody, tell them what you want [Male participant, River Road].”

Female participants from Tivoli concurred, stating that young people act in a dangerous, erratic manner when they are under the influence of marijuana.

“They talk loud in a dangerous manner, and they can’t feel. Like when they smoke marijuana is like I don’t know, like they getting mad. I saw one ah time, he just they saying, Natty girl ah getting mad, and so he they getting on. He eyes red and he running about the place. They body tense, they on they own meditation, and they don’t want nobody to interfere with them. Some boys what I know they say when they smoke marijuana they want to be by they self to meditate, ah don’t know what they meditating
on, they doing like they cannot feel, they cuffing wall and that kind of thing, that’s what the marijuana tell them to do [Female participant, Tivoli].”

The view was expressed by one participant from River Road that although persons who use marijuana might appear or believe that they can conquer everyone, they are actually unable to so. This is because their reaction time is reduced after consuming the drug. It was noted though, that users do not believe this due to the false feeling of power that marijuana creates within the individual.

“They might look bad in appearance, but when you check out they slow, they really slow, they moving dead, so you could handle them, but they feeling bad, they eye close, it can’t open good, can’t see where they going. Some ah them does can see after half past six, when he walking he bouncing up on the stone, he falling down [Male participant, River Road].”

**Marijuana and risky sexual behaviour**

Respondents from Gouyave expressed the opinion that although marijuana increases an individual’s sexual desire, it does not encourage risky sexual behaviour, for example, unprotected sex. This is because consumption of marijuana does not hinder the decision making capability of its users. On the contrary, alcohol can increase the potential for young people to participate in risky sexual activities since it diminishes the individual’s capacity to think rationally.

“No, because it’s not like alcohol when you get drunk. When you smoke weed it puts you on a high. You conscious about everything what is going on around you. So even though it boost your sexual feelings it make you feel like sexual intercourse you have time to stop you partner and say let we put on a condom. It’s not like alcohol, both of you drunk and one thing lead to another. It’s not so with weed, you have self control [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Participants from the other three groups firmly believed that marijuana increases the potential for risky sexual behaviour.

“Yeah, it does make you thirsty. From my point of view, when I go someway now, I does look kind of handsome and thing and a lot of girls go watch me and like me and want to play with me and thing, and one time Johnny boy (penis) get bad and I just do what I have to do [Male participant, Woburn].”

Some respondents from River Road added that marijuana use encourages promiscuity, raping and killing.

“Some ah them they sit down they, any little old lady pass they calling them, they running them down, they doing them all kind ah thing, they going and have sex, some ah them does not even ask, some ah them just take sex, they run down a little girl and they call that George, she just have to take it and cry and call the police when they done [Male participant, River Road].”
It is interesting to note that some participants from Woburn explained that under the influence of marijuana, concern of pregnancy and/or HIV infection are not perceived as important issues. These individuals purported the notion that since life is predestined, there is nothing that can be done to avert the inevitable.

“I en thinking about pregnancy, when you get it (sex), you can’t let it get away. I old enough and HIV have it people. AIDS have it people. What is for you is for you …if you have to get AIDS, you go get AIDS. If you have to drown you can’t burn, that’s what I sure about. You can’t stop six runs. You might be able to stop four but you can’t stop six. So if you have to get AIDS, jump high jump low you must get AIDS [Male participant, Woburn].”

Furthermore, a few participants from River Road added that marijuana use can lead to conflict with the law.

“Yes because when they start to smoke they get high, they do what they want to do, police come and pick them up, lock them up, they want to fight with police, police give them two lash ah cane and they start to cry and they run all about the place [male participant, River Road].”

3.1.5 Reasons for Marijuana Use

Use of marijuana among out-of-school youths is motivated by a number of factors including peer pressure, family influences and unemployment, to name a few. This section discusses the chief causes for marijuana use as reported by the focus group participants.

3.1.5.1 Peer pressure

Negative peer pressure was articulated as a driving force for marijuana use among young people in the majority of focus groups. Participants expressed peer pressure in several forms as described below.
Encouragement by older peers

Participants indicated that older companions tended to encourage younger persons into using drugs. Some participants added that this kind of peer pressure is most effective when a young person is experiencing home problems.

“Sometimes they have a problem at home and a bigger friend, a bigger companion force them into marijuana, and they start taking marijuana and thing. They (the bigger companion) have no respect for they parents...boy don’t study you mother just take a pull [Female participant, Tivoli].”

Long term observation of other persons using marijuana

Participants explained that young persons used marijuana because they observed others, including family members and friends using it over a long period.

“I wanted to taste it because I see people smoke it, my brother smoke it, my friends smoke it. All how I see my friends smoke it, ah still did not bother with it, but one day ah just say let me try it and when ah try it, it make me feel good and relax [Male participant, Tivoli].”

To build self image

Some participants noted that marijuana is used to build self image.

“They see people using it and they want to follow people, they find you in a higher position, when you smoke weed like you bad, you could lime with the big boys and they feel they could do what they want and nobody can tell them nothing. They feel they invincible them alone could hit people and they feel they big they want to follow [Male participant, River Road].”

To avoid being teased

One group mentioned that failure to use marijuana could result in being teased by one’s peers. Teasing appears to be very disturbing for some youths. In an effort to avoid this, some youths consume marijuana.

“They go tease you, they go say all kind ah things about you [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Participants from two groups (Woburn and Tivoli) refuted the influence of peer pressure as a critical factor promoting marijuana use. They added that consumption of marijuana is really a conscious decision made by every user.

“I don’t think anybody could pressure anybody into doing anything they don’t want to do; you know directly what you going and do. So your duty is to stay out of it or if you don’t want to do it, you don’t do it, is up to you [Male participant, Tivoli].”
3.1.5.2 Unemployment, idleness and limited community facilities

Participants from Gouyave and Tivoli stated that unemployment is one of the main reasons encouraging marijuana use among out of school youths. Some participants explained that the process of obtaining a job whether or not an individual is qualified could be very frustrating. Marijuana is therefore viewed as the panacea to such frustrations, primarily because it relieves tension, and is apparently well enjoyed. Largely because of the addictive nature of marijuana, and the pleasant feelings it creates, young people tend to continue using the drug.

“Unemployment, some people when they go for a work they kind ah frustrated and then they might try de marijuana and it ease they mind. So now because they trying to get a job and it en have no job, they have all the education and they can’t get a job they might be sitting on the block, marijuana is smoking, they realize they friends are enjoying it, they want to try it so they go and they smoke and just so it becomes a trend, they smoke and they smoke and after a time they get addicted to it because it make you feel good, it makes you feel at ease, and it keeps you from trouble from time to time [Male participant, Gouyave].”

Female participants from one group indicated that the added responsibility of caring for a child as an unemployed teenage mother lacking basic life skills could be very difficult. It was further noted that obtaining a job under these circumstances is extremely hard since the officials in the public sector are more likely to employ personal associates.

“Sometimes you have an education but you don’t have a skill, it have certain things you would love to do, a lot of things but you can’t do it because you don’t have a job and you have a child and you can’t maintain you self because I dropped out of school and I am trying to get a job but its hard, because when it have the parliamentary office down there the people in the office only giving they people the jobs, it does be hard, it does be real hard [Female participant, Gouyave].”

One group commented that young people lack the appropriate skills to cope with life’s challenges. To this end, drug use is normally viewed as an effective coping strategy during such frustrating periods.

“Frustration, when you frustrated you don’t know what to do and the only thing you could turn to is to smoke drugs and things [Male participant, Woburn].”

Some participants noted that due to the unemployment situation, out of school youths are encouraged to sell marijuana to support themselves financially. The decision to adopt this livelihood strategy is motivated by youths desire to purchase material things, and the fact that parents do not actively prohibit the practice.

“When they leave school and they can’t get a job and they have a partner who could hook them up and sell weed they go get a money to bling (buy things) because young people now like to bling. The parents don’t care because they can get the money to go in the market. After a while the young person will start using the thing [Male participant, Gouyave].”
A few participants noted that despite the above social challenges, very little effort was made by most out of school youths to find a job. They suggested that this lack of concern towards employment could be linked to laziness, the provision of basic needs by parents or guardians and/or other unknown reasons.

Three groups (Tivoli, Woburn and Gouyave) indicated that out of school youths consumed marijuana due to idleness. This stemmed from the high level of unemployment among this subpopulation. Time is therefore utilized by associating with one’s peers and smoking marijuana.

The participants in Gouyave complained that lack of community resource centers catering to the needs of the young person is a major contributing factor to drug use. Young people are not afforded opportunities for participating in constructive recreational activities. They added that the risk for consuming marijuana under these deficient social conditions is greatly increased especially when the individual is unemployed.

“Sometimes you want a little community resource place where we could go and sit down and use the computers as long as we want, we don’t have to pay for everything, you shoot some hoops you and your friends. It have a lot of girls in Gouyave who play basketball and we want a place where we could just go and sit down and relax and chill. A place where we could just go and hand out, you make friends and you just free, you could just go inside they, nobody don’t watching you, no body don’t telling you nothing, you could just go and relax and feel at home, feel at ease. When it en have no jobs and it en have no place for them young people to go, where do you think they will be? On the streets [Female participant, Gouyave].”

3.1.5.3 Influence of parents

Neglect and lack of love from parents

Some participants from three groups identified bad parenting as a key contributing factor for marijuana use. Specifically, they noted that some parents blatantly neglect their children and fail to spend quality time with them. Under these conditions, children seek love outside the home which can lead to unwise decisions with long term negative consequences.

“The parenting, bad parenting, it have parents that just leaving their children, about 8 children in one house and just going, they passing like 4 - 5 minutes and they gone, not single parents, no parents, none of them not staying in the house. When you neglect your child they tend to do all kinds of things, because they would not get the same love so they would go out to look for it. However, sometimes they may go and prostitute and when they prostitute they might do something wrong and they trying to get away from that now so they turn to drugs and thing [Male participant, Woburn].”
Example shown by parents

The possession and sale of prohibited drugs by parents appears to be a significant impetus for marijuana use among youths. Respondents noted that many youths are encouraged to use the illicit substance by their parents. The subtle pressure to conform to parental directions hinders youths from saying no to drugs. It was also reported that overcoming this entrenched cultural pattern is very difficult, and is only possible with positive influential external help.

“If you parents selling it, you go just do it, because that all you know, you grow up into that, if you meet them smoking they say, come and take a joint with daddy boy. He grow up into that so he bring his son up into that, he is proud of his son and the son cannot afford to let his father down so he takes a pull to, and his son will continue to do this unless somebody decide to change them, according to who they meet too, if they get a good girl [Male participant, Woburn].”

Generation gap

A major concern raised by one group is the generation gap that exists between parents and children regarding musical preferences. Participants reported that parents have the freedom of musical choice and refuses to allow their children the same kind of musical liberty. This lack of musical independence can create tension which is relieved through marijuana consumption.

“If we bridge the generation gap, a lot of these problems go stop. The parents go say that kind of music you can’t listen to that in me house, they come and put on they church music and they playing it loud, you can’t tell them nothing about it. But if you put on a hard hip hop now they getting horrors with you. If you can’t get to do what you want, free your mind you leaving and you going out, you thieving a change and you starting to smoke. When you can’t be bothered sometimes you start to smoke so much you like a drake on the side of the road [Male participant, Woburn].”

3.1.5.4 Perceived usefulness of marijuana

Young people particularly males consumed marijuana because of its perceived usefulness in improving their physical health. This is especially common among athletes who believe that consumption of marijuana can enhance their ability to perform.

“Boys, boys they take it to enhance their ability, like some of them are athletes and they may take it to build their body and stuff and they believe it building their body [Female participant, Tivoli].”

Other participants also stated that use of marijuana enhances their intelligence.

“It’s just the feeling it does make you have, it does make me feel intelligent, I could read a whole encyclopedia [Female participant, Gouyave].”
Participants from two groups noted that marijuana also increases a person’s libido (Refer to Section 3.1.4.2).

“Oh, some people use marijuana to boost their sex life, because sometimes when you smoke it, it makes you feel sexy, male as well as female [Female participant, Gouyave].”

### 3.1.5.5 Stress

All groups alluded to the need to relieve various stressors as a reason for drug use. The stressors reported by respondents are presented below.

**Broken relationships**

Broken relationships can be very stressful. Considering the limited capacity of some young people to cope with stressful situations as noted previously, marijuana is used to temporarily get rid of that problem (Refer to Section 3.1.5.2).

“Oh, maybe to take out stress on their mind, stress at home, you, girlfriend leave you and you take on that and just start to smoke [Male participant, Tivoli].”

**Death of a family member**

Participants also identified the death of a family member as a major stress factor which encourages use of marijuana.

“They have other stress like when one of their family die, like their mother, and them and they mother what staying together, they won’t know what to do, so they taking it out on the marijuana [Male participant, River Road].”

**Home and school problems**

Two groups identified home and school problems as directly responsible for drug use. One group noted that the use of drugs by parents, exacerbated by the low socio-economic status and the lack of emotional support from one’s family can create major anxiety for youngsters. Stress escalates when parents, under the influence of drugs continually disrespect and demoralize children. In an effort to cope with these problems, young people remain long periods away from home and smoke marijuana to forget such domestic troubles.

“My father is a drug addict and when he smoke he cocaine, he is very provokeful, and sometimes that does kind ah stress us, you don’t want to know my problems home. My father coming home high almost every day, and just cursing us and saying we don’t good. Is real problems we have, my father not there for us and me mother don’t working, just stress, so all you feel to do is stay away from the house and smoke, you on your meditation and you forget everything. That is how it is for a lot of youths here in Gouyave, we on we own [Female participant, Gouyave].”
A few participants indicated that the lack of persons to speak to about one’s problems also encourages drug use.

“Because you have problems home and problems in school and you don’t have people to talk to, to tell your problems and thing [Male participant, Woburn].”

Get away from the busy life

One group noted that marijuana is sometimes used to avoid noise in the society.

“Sometimes the place get to noisy, and you just need to get away so you just smoke a marijuana and chill [male participant, Woburn].”

3.1.5.6 Experiment

The need to experience the pleasant feelings that marijuana could supposedly provide was indicated as an impetus for use.

“Experiment; some people hearing about it and how it does give a nice feeling, they just want to try it to see what its like because everybody have to have their own experience [Male participant, Gouyave].”

3.1.5.7 Influence of music and musical artists

The lyrics of some songs particularly hip-hop boldly promote marijuana use as reported by two groups. Due to the fact that young people adore these musical artists and view them as role models, there is a tendency to follow their lifestyles which can result in marijuana use.

“Especially Mr. Tupac and Sizzler, right now I have a herb CD home, that’s the name of the CD I does listen it but I don’t smoke weed. They (young people) just listen to the music and smoke a weed, they there on a height, just chilling, meditating. But these big sounds like Tupac and them, real men like them men, they are like role models so they would smoke to … they would do everything that they see them doing [Male participant, Woburn].”

3.1.5.8 Worthlessness

A few participants from one group noted that young people use marijuana due to the fact that they are simply being worthless.

“I find that it is plain worthlessness to use it, its all in the mind [Male participant, River Road].”

They added that these young people are interested in getting involved in deviant social activities. To this end, marijuana is used to provide the confidence needed to execute such plans.
“They want to get high, they want to kill people, they want to beat up people, they want to feel high to do what they want [Male participant, River Road].”

3.1.5.9 Unexplained reason

One group noted that there are times that young people seem to be enjoying a good life and yet they get involved in drug use.

“It have some people that have a nice life and they still smoking weed [male participant, Woburn].”

3.1.6 Crime and marijuana use

3.1.6.1 Definition of crime

All four groups defined a crime as an act that breaks the law.

“Anything that is against the law [Male participant, Tivoli].”

Other generic responses provided included an act that is violent (Tivoli); that can harm a person (Woburn); and is punishable (River Road).

3.1.6.2 Link between marijuana use and crime

Participants’ perception on the link between marijuana use and criminal behaviours among young people was sought through this study. The majority of respondents from all groups excluding River Road dismissed the notion that marijuana encourages young people in crime.

In fact, most respondents from Tivoli and Gouyave asserted that on the contrary marijuana instills a new consciousness in the individual, thus promoting positive attitudes and behaviours (Refer to Section 3.1.2.1).

“I was a wild child on the street and ah use to smoke more cigarettes, now I smoking more weed. Before them time I did not use to check up on me life but now as ah smoking and thing, I think a lot of things, and is like ah overs (understand) me life because ah smoking marijuana, now I get a meditation to change me life because ah seeing certain things and it change me a lot, so I could say it (marijuana) change me in a good way [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Similarly, some respondents indicated that marijuana promotes individualism and a heightened inclination to participate in activities that one enjoys.
“I find that when young people smoke marijuana they does be for they self and do what they like doing [Male participant, Gouyave].”

Furthermore, respondents from Woburn emphasized that marijuana does not promote criminal activity; on the contrary, criminal behaviour is really a derivative of an individual’s personality.

“No, it’s the person. If I set my mind to thief, I could smoke 99 joints, that en have nothing to do with it, I en have to smoke nothing because that what I decide to do. If I decide to thief, jump high jump low, I go rob you [Male participant, Woburn].”

Some participants from Gouyave stated that smoking marijuana is not a crime since it does not harm the body.

“When the police come and meet you smoking it they would charge you, but it is not a crime to us, it does our body no harm. So to us we don’t see it as a crime [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Rather some respondents from Gouyave believed that consumption of cocaine is a crime due to the negative impact it has on the individual, both physically and socially.

“I see cocaine as a crime, look at what it doing to them. But I don’t see this (smoking marijuana) as a crime. People thief to buy cocaine, people don’t thief to buy marijuana. We they around here and we getting it straight, you getting it live, you getting it direct [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Any criminal activities among young people, according to participants from Gouyave, are linked to the powerful influence of television and rap music. Young people get involved in crime to mimic the materialistic oriented lifestyle of many musical artists.

“No its TV, its not only BET. On a whole is the rap music and they having it as if is weed that want you to do that, is not weed is the music we hearing and we listening. We like them (musical artists) so much, and they driving this car and wearing this shoes, that is what lead to crime in our community. You see because they want the latest Adidas, latest Puma, latest brand name top, latest brand name pants…all they see on TV they must have it to [Female participant, Gouyave].”

Some respondents, primarily from River Road, and to a lesser extent, Tivoli disagreed with the above thesis, and purported the point that marijuana use is linked to criminal activities among youths. Firstly, a few participants stated that young people are involved in possession, sale and transshipment of marijuana.

“Some ah them involve in selling it, they plant that, they go up in the mountain and plant it or they ship it from St. Vincent and they selling it and making big money. The other day a boy went and leave he bicycle and they thief it and send it up in St. Vincent on a boat and they send back weed for them to sell [Male participant, River Road]”

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4 One female participant was actually smoking marijuana at the start of the discussion.
These participants added that the above activities are crimes according to national laws. The participants noted that possession of marijuana represents only the start of a long process of criminal activity among the youth. This is because most young people steal money and agricultural products to trade to support their drug habit.

“Taking marijuana alone is against the law, so once you start is like Pringles, they done do one crime already so they just go through, they thieving all the money to go and buy marijuana. They don’t thief in houses, they thief money, they break open people shop, fight with people and take their money, who ever leave their money on the block and they forget it, they pick pocket them [Male participant, River Road].”

The respondents added that stealing also occurs in the home.

“Some ah them go home and ask they mother for a $5.00, they mother en give them, they want to fight, when they mother turn she back and go, they go and take she money and buy weed and smoke [Male participant, River Road].”

A few respondents from Tivoli argued that marijuana users do not steal to support their habit due to the low cost of marijuana. On the other hand, stealing to support one’s drug habit is really a trait of the cocaine user.

“Cocaine man that does do that; marijuana does not make you do that; marijuana is very cheap. $2.00 for a joint about you finger, you don’t have to thief to get it [Male participant, Tivoli].”

Some participants from River Road believed that marijuana encourages fighting and other violent behaviour, some of which can have legal implications.

“Yes, some of them get in fight, they chopping up people [Male participant, River Road].”

3.1.7 Prevention Programmes

3.1.7.1 Knowledge of prevention programmes

Most participants only had a vague idea of the drug use prevention programmes implemented nationally, targeting young people. Participants from three communities (Woburn, River Road and Tivoli) identified the Drug Abuse Resistant Education (DARE) programme as a past initiative to prevent drug use. Participants from River Road and Woburn made reference to one public service announcement developed by the Drug
Control secretariat in collaboration with UNESCO that is currently been aired on various media stations. Most of the participants from Gouyave were unaware of prevention programmes. One participant from the latter community mentioned the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (RBTT) Young Leaders programme, and activities organized by youth groups as intervention strategies implemented at the school level.

### 3.1.7.2 Views on effectiveness

A few participants noted that the programs were effective, since they played an important role in sensitizing youths about the seriousness of drugs.

Albeit this, most participants indicated that the programmes implemented are not effective. Two main reasons were proposed to support the above viewpoint. Firstly, some participants did not believe that the planned interventions were meeting the needs of the target audience. In particular, the programmes were too boring and did not garner the interest of the young persons.

“No it doesn’t really make sense [Female participant, Tivoli].”

Secondly, some participants noted that the implementing agencies are not doing enough to truly convince the youth that they are really valued. This is because of the heavy responsibilities placed on the youths by their elders.

“They are not doing enough, even though they doing, the effort is not hard enough. They not putting they best foot forward because they does say children are the generation, the future of tomorrow but to them everybody have to fend for they self - is a dog eat dog life. Some parents before you could stand on you own 2 foot and you hand long enough they want you to wash you own clothes, their clothes, you father clothes, and everything, all responsibility is on us [Male participant, Woburn].”

### 3.1.8 Ideas for preventing marijuana use

Participants provided a list of suggestions for preventing marijuana use among out-of-school youths as discussed below. Ideas are presented under three main categories.

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5 Participant is a secondary school drop out.
3.1.8.1 Combating unemployment and poverty

- **Establish a community resource place:** This idea was suggested exclusively by the participants from Gouyave in an effort to overcome the dual challenges of idleness and unemployment (Refer to Section 3.1.5.2). One participant proposed that a skills training programme be incorporated in this initiative to empower young persons particularly school drop-outs to secure gainful employment.

  “The government of Grenada should have a place where you could just sit down and learn a skill because sometimes you have an education but you don’t have a skill and you can’t get a job [Female participant, Gouyave].”

- **Develop Industries:** The need for developing an industry was proposed as a community project for Gouyave considering its wealth of fishing resources. Participants believed that this would provide much needed income to fisherfolk during slow catching periods, addressing the issues of poverty, frustration and ultimately marijuana use.

  “We need some industries. Imagine St. John’s is the biggest fishing village, we does hold more fish, we does export more fish to the UK, America, than any other place in Grenada, we doh even have an industry. It have certain times especially around late July-August, they doesn’t hold anything and some ah them have children and that is the poor people in the country, in the society of St. John’s. We doh even have a little industry to say, or some kind of benefit whey fishermen pay that when things hard dey could get a little grant even doh they doh have something for the dry days. It making the place get more tie up, more poverty, more young people coming and smoke drugs [Female participant, Gouyave].”

- **Accountable and transparent community assistance:** Participants from Gouyave stress the need for accountable, transparent and equitable community assistance irrespective of family lineage.

  “We need people who doe watch who is your parents, and what you parents do, and what lineage you come from. We need people who have a heart and who could see well who really need help, and not who all you want to give, because there is a big difference between a want and a need. It have needy people and it have people who naturally greedy and always want. We need people in the community who have a heart and could help people in need [Male participant, Gouyave].”

It is important to note, though, that one female participant from Gouyave mentioned that nothing would prevent her from using marijuana due to her intense dependence and love for the drug.

  “Nothing can stop me, I go have to dead. If they lock me up ah sending and get it still. I need it to get a cool meditation for my use. I love it, even if they lock me up when ah come out, I’ll get it, I go in prison, I’ll get it to, so I don’t have to worry because is just a feeling it does make you have…I get so accustom to it is like part of me, like how walking is part of me, now smoking is part of me and I just love it and I would not stop for no body [Female participant, Gouyave].”
3.1.8.2 Improving the national capacity for law enforcement

Example by law enforcement officers: Participants identified the need for law enforcement officials to more effectively tackle drug supply and demand nationally. Participants from Tivoli noted that prevention of marijuana among out-of-school youths must begin with an example from law enforcement officers. This is based on the perception among the focus group participants that some law enforcement officials consume and conduct business with seized illicit substances.

“People in authority have to take responsibility because when they come and take the marijuana from who so ever selling the marijuana, them going and sell it for they self to, even the police officer who come and take it, they does smoke it, they coming and buy it so them have to set the example to, so we cant do what we feel to do they have to do something too, set an example [Male participant, Tivoli].”

More effective law enforcement: More effective enforcement of the criminal code is needed to deter present and potential future users and/or traders.

“Stop them from smoking, let the police pick up everybody who making the weed and thing and cut down everything, they weak, they have to lock up those who selling it and those who smoking it [Male participant, River Road].”

Participants noted that efforts must be made to stop the importation of drugs into the country.

3.1.8.3 Public awareness and education

Participants stated that programs should be organized to sensitive the target audience of the seriousness of marijuana. Success of these programmes is dependent on their ability to secure the interest of the target audience. Therefore, the involvement of young people in the planning process would be critical to ensure the development of successful programmes.

School based programmes were also proposed due to the positive influence in offsetting peer pressure and other negative influences. They stressed though that such programs must begin at a very early stage in the child’s development.

“Start teaching about drugs in school earlier, they could start in primary school, maybe grade 5, because around that time those children feel they big they want to leave school and they may see they elder brothers smoking so they want to d it to, most of them start practicing with beedee, cigarette, and stuff [Female participant, Tivoli].”

Some participants promoted onsite community visits as a formidable strategy in preventing drug use among the target audience. In addition, respondents suggested discussion based programmes beginning at a very early age to discuss openly the effects of drugs on the human body.
It was suggested by the group in Tivoli that any community program organized would need music and/or food to stimulate interest among the target audience (Refer to Section 2.4).

Use of the media and popular music were also highlighted as powerful avenues for reaching youths.

3.1.8 Special needs

Participants identified three needs that should be made available to the target audience if planned prevention strategies are expected to create certain desired results.

- Provide counselors that are approachable and accessible;
- Develop programs to improve the home environments of youths; and
- Provide financial assistance to disadvantaged youths.

3.3 COMMUNITY KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

3.3.1 Consumption patterns

3.3.1.1 Age of initiation

Generally speaking, most community informants reported that out of school youths commenced marijuana usage between the periods of 13 – 14 years (Refer to Section 3.1.3.1).

“I will suspect anywhere around 13/14, you have people smoking marijuana, I have seen students who drop out of school, they do not pass common entrance and they do not come back to school, and now they smoking marijuana, and they are anywhere between 13, 14, 15 years [Key informant, Tivoli].”

However, the informants from Gouyave, and to a lesser extent, Woburn, indicated that commencement age could be as early as 10 years.

“The guys smoke marijuana from the tender age of 10 to lets say about approximately 40-55 years [Key informant, Gouyave].”

3.3.1.2 Patterns of use

It was reported by some informants that smoking marijuana by out-of-school youths is a daily event. There were also reports of poly drug use among the target group.
“A lot of them drop out from school, like 13 years because they always on the block, everyday they sitting and they smoke they marijuana, they buy cigarette, drink rum everything [Key informant, Woburn].”

On the other hand, the participant from Gouyave indicated that the majority of youths in that community smoked continuously, similar to that of a chain smoker (Refer to Section 3.1.3.2). This habit, the informant noted, is sustained due to the sharing of financial resources among group members.

“As long as the clock ticking, man smoking marijuana. You see you and I could be friends I may now finish smoke ah 2 joint, by the time I was smoking you wasn’t around, but as you pump up now you go say ah have money ah go buy a joint, I go say ah ready for that and I smoking again. Ah may smoke 40 already in front you, somebody else may come and buy as well so I continue smoking and smoking as fast as the day going [Key informant, Gouyave].”

All informants were of the opinion that use of marijuana among the target audience is increasing. In fact, there appears to be wide scale use in the various communities.

“There doesn’t have to be an activity or so to see large marijuana use, people smoking marijuana on a large scale, youths in particular; going up the road and you see them in almost any corner. Because a lot of these youths are not working, they unemployed, they home, they gather during the day and just smoke; where are they getting the money? I don’t know [Key informant, Tivoli].”

One informant from River road specified places where marijuana use is normally prevalent. These included major reggae shows, sporting activities and areas of relaxation in the community, particularly in the evening and night.

“They use it when there are shows in the stadium, like when they have shows with those Rasta guys, reggae shows. Also when there was something on the court, I see them smoking around there. I’ve noticed there was something by the marketing board I’ve seen them there…Sometimes in the evening time or at night time they are in there liming, and they smoke [Key informant, River Road].”

### 3.3.1.3 Gender and consumption patterns

Regarding gender, some participants particularly those from Tivoli and Woburn indicated that use of marijuana is predominantly a male thing.

“I believe that marijuana use is very common among youths in Tivoli and surrounding areas, in particular with the males, young males…So yes it is very common especially among the males [Key informant, Tivoli].”

Participant from Gouyave refuted this and noted that marijuana is used by everybody irrespective of gender (Refer to Section 3.1.3.3).

“What I would say is, from what ah seeing it increasing because partly every body woman and man smoking marijuana in Gouyave, is not to say man smoking and woman
3.3.2 Reasons for Marijuana Use

This section discusses the main reasons as related by community key informants explaining marijuana use among out of school youths.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure was identified by key informants in all four communities as the single greatest factor promoting use of marijuana among out of school youths (Refer to Section 3.1.5.1). Various forms of peer pressure were described by Informants as presented below.

Influence of friends

The influence of friends was indicated by three key informants (River Road, Tivoli and Gouyave) as a principal causative agent.

“Well sometimes friends influence you to do things you don’t want to do, for instance I might be a marijuana smoker, me and you might be close friends. One day you may come and meet me smoking, I may ask you to take a pull and then, and I might say ah never smoke yet, and he say try it and I get caught up [Community informant, Gouyave].”

Influence of older males

It was also reported by the informant from River Road that older males use the advantage of age and physical strength to encourage younger males into the drug habit.

“It is peer pressure, most of the time they don’t want to do it, I have spoken to some young people and they did not really want to do it but because of the bigger guys are pushing them into it and they get addicted to it, they don’t want to stop [Community informant, River Road].”

Fashionable

The fact that many people are using the drug sends a message that drug use is an accepted social norm.
“It come like a norm, because everybody doing it, it’s like a style, a fashion, everybody smoking…so it is easier for them to fit in because society is doing it [Community informant, Woburn].”

**Influence of parents and the home**

Informants from all communities noted that parents are responsible for marijuana use among youths in a number of ways as described below (Refer to Section 3.1.5.3).

**Example shown by parents**

Based on reports provided by informants in all communities, parents who use marijuana encourage use among their children.

“I know there are young parents and they smoke marijuana and they do not see a problem with their child smoking marijuana, so it is not a problem if they child smoke marijuana and so its probably the norm, well you smoke marijuana, I smoke marijuana, nothing wrong with marijuana. They see their parents doing it so they think its okay to, so nobody is really against it [Key Informant, Tivoli].”

**Inadequate parent-child relationship/parental support**

The problem is exacerbated by the Lack of interest shown by parents.

“Some of them (young people who use marijuana) who I know of is because the parents work at night, when they home in the day they don’t make time for their children [Community informant, River Road].”

In some instances parents who use drugs are not able to provide moral support for their children; this encourages them to go outside the home and seek persons who can provide these needs. Under these circumstances young people tend to get involved in the activities of that mentor, which can lead them into drug use.

“When parents are not there for their children and the kids may feel that they need some one to talk to, so they go and hang out with the guys who they figure are there for them, and they do what ever the guys tell them to do [Key Informant, River Road].”

The informant added that this problem occurs sometimes because of the inadequate training of the parent in bringing up their children due to their own deficient socialization process.

“It is not because the parents are not willing but because of how they themselves have been brought up, they don’t have that in them how to raise they own children, so I will think when we have to start, some people say start with the kids but I will say start with the parents, the parents themselves need that education [Key Informant, River Road].
Limited parental supervision

Some informants noted that the limited supervision provided by some parents definitely encourages young people in compromising situations, which promote drug use.

“In this area, sad enough but very unfortunate I believe too much youths get too much freedom at an early age, too early. It is also a common thing to see youths, teenagers or people in their early teens on the street very late at night and you know the kind of things that are out there, so they are being influenced. If you as the father or mother head of the household have that child at home within their doors after certain hours, it is less likely that person will go out and get influenced like ah telling you [Key Informant, Tivoli].

One key Informant from Gouyave elaborated that the frequently organized entertainment activities provide the ideal opportunity for such minimal adult supervision.

“There is a lot of entertainment in Gouyave, like every weekend there is some DJ playing music some where. Children all age go to these activities and at times they are not even supervised. They are out young and old at all hours, it’s the norm in Gouyave [Community informant, Gouyave].”

Neglect

Neglect of siblings by their parents was identified by informants of Woburn as a major contributing factor for marijuana use among youths.

“Everyday you wake you see them on the block, you see the bigger ones, father leave them, mother leave them so they have no way to turn than on the block. They buy an eight of rum, they drink rum, they smoke, they behave bad, they provoke people, they beat people [Key Informant, Woburn].”

The informant added that because of this situation the children are bombarded with an array of responsibilities.

“They have to do everything for themselves, get food and all sort of things [key informant, Woburn].”

Parent-child communication

Some parents lack the skill needed to communicate effectively with their children. In addition, parents are still locked up in the historical culture of the aristocratic leader, which further restricts effective communication at the home.

“Things have change so why are we expecting to treat young people with the same way we use to do it 20 years ago…they may sound rude, but they are not rude [Community informant, Woburn].”

The informant continued that this problem is really a cyclical problem that continues throughout generations.
"We have a responsibility to our children but the fact is that you cannot give what you don’t have because most of these parents grow up in a way that they did not know how to speak to their children, their mother never did it so they just grow up in a cycle, so they just passing on what they learn and most of the time it’s the wrong way…we just seeing we self as the one who providing but not as a role model for that man or woman [Community informant, Woburn].”

One informant from Gouyave noted that the inability to cope successfully with home problems leads youngsters to use marijuana.

“A man might have a little problem home and he feel all what he do home he wrong and he takes this to his head and you never know…[Key Informant, Gouyave].

The informant added that this should not occur since the individual in question should be confident enough to work out the problem at home or with some friends since marijuana cannot solve the problem. Nevertheless, he agreed that this happens.

“I would not say home problems though, some people will say you having problems at you home so you go and take drugs. I don’t feel that suppose to be. If you have a problem home either work it out home or with some friends, drugs cannot solve you problems but in some cases it does happen [Key Informant, Gouyave].”

**Limited involvement of the community in youth development**

The limited involvement of community members in youth development was identified by informants from three communities (River Road and Woburn) as providing a countervailing impetus for marijuana use among youths. Specifically, two issues were deemed relevant as discussed below.

*Apathy of community role models*

The key informant recognized the crucial role that must be played by community leaders in stimulating positive behaviour among young people. This is necessary since young people are liable to make mistakes and would therefore need constant admonitions by role models in the various communities to make wise decisions.

“The role models are needed to steer young people into the right direction, to help them make positive decisions. Teenagers will make mistakes since this is the stage “if good people don’t do anything badness will continue [Key Informant, Woburn].”

However, the majority of community role models isolate themselves from the youthful community population on the grounds that they cannot cope with the problems of the youth. Crime and other deviant behaviours among young people therefore thrive under these conditions.

“The good people are saying we don’t have time with this young people, they to this and they to that, and we find ourselves in we home and leave badness on the streets…, so
how can we prevent crime and badness when all these role models go in their house they pass and they wind up their car. So young people feeling neglected, nobody interested in them, so is badness between badness [Key Informant, Woburn].”

Moreover, this apathetic attitude exhibited by community members deviates from the historical involvement of communities in the development of young people.

“In the past it use to have the elders, you know anybody could beat you child and straighten them out but you don’t get this thing, so the community don’t play a great role into children life anymore, so even if an adult pass and see a child smoking they wouldn’t say anything to them [Key Informant, River Road].”

**Inadequate constructive activities at the community level**

Respondents (from Gouyave and Tivoli) claimed that there are insufficient constructive activities planned for youths at the community level. This results in young people channelling their energies and time into activities that do not conform to and/or promote positive behaviour (Refer to Section 3.1.5.2).

“There is not enough community activities for the youths to take part in, so instead of putting their energy somewhere else they tend to go the other way [Key Informant, Tivoli].”

**Influence of role models**

Two community key informants (Gouyave and Tivoli) indicated that use of marijuana by the role models of young people are a major contributing factor for use. This occurs due to the perception by youths that this activity is wholesome.

“They may have an idol, looking up to that person and they may see that person using drugs and they feel that this is the way to go [Community informant, Tivoli].”

One typical example of such role models is the Jamaican musical artists.

“You know their role models are marijuana users, the Jamaican musical artists, so they use marijuana to [Community informant, Gouyave].

The problem is compounded when role models reside in the same community as the youth.

“It’s the norm, father doing it, big brother using it, best friend doing it, and all of them are role models and when you see these people doing it, it seems like it is a good thing to do because everybody’s doing it [Community Informant, Woburn].”

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Accessibility of marijuana

The accessibility of marijuana at the community level was deemed by two informants (River Road and Gouyave) as a major facilitating condition for marijuana use among young people.

“People in the area sell marijuana, I myself know of people that sell it, and the young people know to [Community informant, River Road].”

In addition, it was suggested by one Informant (Gouyave) that the indiscriminate selling of marijuana is also compounding the problem of usage among young people. It appears that the salespersons of the product are not concerned about the age of the buyer, and do not adopt the attitude that cigarette sellers use when a minor purchases the product. The marijuana trader is driven solely by monetary gains.

“Once you have money to buy no matter what age you have, them guys go sell it for you. You might send a child in the shop to buy cigarette and the shopkeeper might ask you who send you, you might say you mother and they might give it to you and say well go back and tell that person don’t send you to buy cigarette, is not so. Once you have money the drugs men sell for you, be it 2 years, 3 years; is a matter of making money, nothing else [Community informant, Gouyave].”

Unemployment and idleness

Unemployment and idleness are major factors proposed by informants from two communities as influencing drug use among the target audience. Since the majority of these young people did not complete formal standard educational requirements, they lack the skills needed to secure gainful employment. This type of lifestyle is accompanied by large amounts of free time which is normally utilized by smoking (Refer to Section 3.1.5.2).

“As fast as the children and them leave school they have no way to go nothing to do so they turn to that, marijuana [Community informant, Woburn].”

It was noted though that some of these youngsters are not interested in seeking gainful employment despite the fact that employment is available within their community. The informant accredited this to the fact that all their needs are provided for them, so they have very little responsibility at home.

“They don’t want work, they don’t like to work, because some of them when they go home they get they food, they get clothes, they get everything, so what they working for. Parents have a part to play in this. People coming from all St. Patrick’s and come down here and get work on the island. If you go on the island now you only get about five of them from the area down here, it could have been more and they have hundreds of them on the island, so they don’t work they rather to stay on the block and beg and do all sorts of wrong things [Key Informant, Woburn].”

Peer pressure was also noted as a contributing factor to the low motivation for work among youths.
“Well they following friends, friends en want to work so they en want to work to, they rather sit down on the block or this old house yonder, that is the way they lime…[Key Informant, Woburn].”

**Perceived importance of marijuana**

Informants from two communities noted that many youths consume marijuana due to their perception of its importance. For instance some believe that marijuana can increase their chances of passing exams.

“Take a smoke and drink a glass of milk. That’s what they says, and they are going to pass their exams [Key Informant, Tivoli].”

Key informants reported that marijuana is used as a means of making a living for many people. To this end, community members protect the marijuana business and seek to take necessary steps to ensure that it continues.

“I remember once we had an anti drug march where we were saying no to drugs. And they said to us, how do you want us to make a living? You want me to dead, just as how you making a living ah making a living to [Community informant, Gouyave].”

**Inadequate education emphasizing the impact of drugs**

Informants from two communities indicated that the efforts of parents, the school and the church are inadequate in sensitizing young people about the effects of drugs. Moreover, they noted that many parents are inadequately prepared to deal with this kind of education.

“I don’t think that parents spend enough time talking to their children about the effects that these drugs can have, not only spend time but I don’t think the parents are equipped they don’t have the necessary skills or so to deal with those kind of situations, so I think that’s why most of our young stars fall short [Community informant, Tivoli].”

**Stimulation/sensations it creates**

Apparently the stimulations provided by marijuana encourage its use as stated by two informants from River Road and Tivoli.

“Some people they are not bothered with whether it is a drug or not a drug, they want to smoke and they want to get that feeling from the smoke…I believe is the feeling that holding them to it [Key Informant, Tivoli].”

**Payment for purchasing marijuana**

One respondent from Tivoli explained that young people are compensated with marijuana for purchasing the illicit substance for a community member. This practice they indicated encourages marijuana use among young people over time.
“I know of quite a lot of persons who have started using marijuana as a result of payment for somebody sending them to buy it. For example, if I send you to buy a 5 piece, when you come back instead of giving you $2 or $5, I might give you a draw, and so it’s a kind of payment (Community informant, Tivoli).”

**Impact of the fishing culture**

The informants from Gouyave stated that the high dependence on fishing in that community has created a culture whose defining characteristics provides facilitating conditions for marijuana use among young people in that community as discussed below.

A significant percentage of school age youths in Gouyave stop attending school prematurely and assume the profession of fishermen. This occurs because of a number of factors. Firstly, as reported by the informants, the fishing industry is financially attractive to young people.

“They (young people involved in the fishing industry) get paid very good, the pay is quite attractive, so in a season when there is a lot of fish coming in, them guys make a lot of money as much as me and you (public servants) at the end of the month [Community informant, Gouyave].”

To this end, many school age individuals whose parents are unable to adequately provide their needs stay away from school fairly frequently with the intent on supporting themselves. As this lifestyle continues, the youth perceives fishing as a more pragmatic decision that attending school.

“A lot of them they have to mind themselves, parents do not really give them or provide for them, so even if they are some in secondary school and want to stay in secondary school they have to drop out a week or so to do fishing or they have to stay up very late in the night to clean fish, so they do not have time to do their homework, studies and things like that, and to get up early in the morning to go to school, so its better to be out of school because they have to mind themselves [Community informant, Gouyave].”

Secondly, some low achievers who are members of poor households leave school and fish fulltime in order to support themselves.

“You go to secondary school and you’re not brilliant, you not achieving quite much and some of them would go hungry if they don’t do the fishing, so is quite better for them to stay out do the fishing and make money. So it’s the money behind it, they do make money, good money [Community informant, Gouyave].”

The financial freedom attained by young people involved in the fishing industry detracts from the importance of formal and/or technical education.

“They en thinking about something else, maybe I could be a carpenter, a tailor - everybody following fishing. If every morning two dozen young fellers lets say from the age of 14 - 16 years maybe go in a garage or spend 8 hours someway in a institution...”
whey they could benefit at the and ah the day, that don‘t happening in Gouyave [Community informant, Gouyave].”

Moreover, this financial freedom significantly reduces parental control over these young people, increasing the potential for drug use. Due to their independence it is difficult for parents to take away their daily needs and/or use negative reinforcement as a disciplinary measure.

“So most of the young men who go out to fish they get they marijuana before they go, they running to gun battle to get their dealer to get their marijuana to go out there…they have money in hand. Is not like they have to go and ask their parents for money to buy, they have their money, parents going to give them food but they have they money, they go buy it still and there are a lot of eating places in Gouyave. So its not like parents punishing you they en giving you no food, that you will not be able to get food so you will stop taking the drugs, they have their money in their hand, they go and pull a net catch some fish, sell the fish and they have money in hand, so is a day to day thing [Key Informant, Gouyave].”

Thirdly, many of the young fishermen witness the smoking of marijuana by older fishermen. This subtle pressure over time encourages use among the young person.

“Most of the fishermen use marijuana so the young boys follow, so it’s just seeing and doing, copy cat example [Community informant, Gouyave].”

An interesting observation reported is that many of the young people involved in fishing complete their daily workload very early during the day. Thus they have a large amount of free time available. Since they are not interested in vocational training, they occupy themselves smoking and gambling.

“So with the drug taking there is a lot of gambling and in gun battle they gambling all day long, 24 hours and the drugs are being sold and smoked while they gamble, and all of that just tie up the country [Key Informant, Gouyave].”

_Disrespect for the law_

Informants from Tivoli noted that people are aware that smoking marijuana is a breech of the criminal laws of the nation. Nevertheless, they disregard the law since they do not support its rationale.

“As you always find it there are some people who will not believe they are above the law but some believe that some laws probably do not make sense…everybody know that marijuana is illegal and by smoking it they are just showing disregard to the law, total disregard to the law, simple as that. I am smoking marijuana, its okay to smoke marijuana so I don’t care what the law says [Key Informant, Tivoli].”
**Low self esteem**

Low self esteem emanating from inadequate learning skills encourages marijuana use among some young people.

“Some children don’t pick up things (knowledge) as easily as other children and their parents make them feel that they are stupid or other people make them think that they are stupid because they can’t pick up things as fast as other people and they figure they have no self worth so they do something that make themselves feel good and they get involve in drugs [key informant, River Road].”

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### 3.3.4 Link Between Marijuana and Risky Behaviour

#### 3.3.4.1 Violence

One of the key informants from Gouyave stated that marijuana does not encourage violent behaviour among young people; rather such negative behaviours are stimulated by cocaine (Refer to Section 3.1.4.2).

“Well is not really violence you know, dey become kind of tipsy, like everybody laugh and make fun out of everybody. The man what go be the more hostile man is the cocaine man, the cocaine man different from de marijuana smoker. The marijuana smoker more humble, the cocaine man go be more vicious. If I is the marijuana man and I don’t have money I go humble, ah go get a smoke from a friend, the cocaine smoker go look to rob something to get it. So I en feel the marijuana man violent when he smoke he does be more humble [Male informant, Gouyave].”

Moreover, the participants from two communities (Tivoli and River Road) reported that persons using marijuana tend to exhibit dual behaviours. They stated that some persons are very quiet and calm after using marijuana.

“Yes, I believe. I live in this community and I have noticed a lot of people after smoking marijuana some people I believe get very, very calm, very quiet, go in a corner and so forth [Key informant, Tivoli].”

On the other hand, informants from three communities (River Road, Tivoli and Woburn) indicated that although marijuana can encourage positive behaviours, it is more likely to stimulate negative attitudes and behaviours.
“After the energy that is built up after using marijuana, it could cause you to do anything, it could cause you to do good things and bad things but I believe its more likely to cause you to do harmful things than good things [Community informant, Woburn].”

In addition, some participants indicated that marijuana hinders the decision making capabilities of the individual.

“When they high they figure they could do anything. I know some cases where some people smoke they tend to act out, they don’t care what happen because they not thinking straight so they figure they could do anything and it does not matter, when they smoke it cause them to overreact [Key informant, River Road].”

Two informants (Woburn and River Road) mentioned that they were uncertain about the link between marijuana use and violence.

“I’ve witness fights where people were smoking but I can’t say if it was because of marijuana or not [Key informant, River Road].”

3.3.3.2 Risky sexual activities

In reference to risky sexual activities, all informants indicated that marijuana increases the potential for risky sexual behaviour. They explained that marijuana slows down the reaction time of the individual, which increases the probability for making unwise decisions, for instance unprotected sex.

“What I could say is in terms of taking marijuana to have sex - marijuana is a thing it does slow down people, maybe if a young boy and a young girl sit down together and they smoke a joint, maybe the mood she may be in, you could get her involve because it does slow down processes. Anytime you smoke marijuana, you don’t have the zeal as what you had before, everything is a break down. You could smoke marijuana and I touching you, touching you up, and you just laughing until I get my hands all over you and anything could happen [Key informant, Gouyave].”

Furthermore, one informant added that under the influence of marijuana young people are not cautious, and tend to arbitrarily disregard known risky sexual circumstances.

“Yes they could do anything, when they take marijuana they could do anything, they doesn’t care, well a lot ah them say it don’t have AIDS you know, they say that, there is nothing they call AIDS, so they do anything [Key informant, Woburn].”
3.3.4 Perception of Link Between Marijuana and Crime

There was the general consensus among all key informants that marijuana use increases the likelihood of criminal activities due to the reduction of the individual’s reasoning power.

“Yeah, because when they take it they lose reason, so they become very aggressive, they become very edgy [Key informant, Gouyave].”

3.3.4.1 Stealing

Stealing was the chief law breaking activity identified by all informants. Informants reported that young people using marijuana stole things to support their drug habit (Refer to Section 3.1.6.2).

“I have been told of situations like this, because right now I think there is one young man, I don’t know if the case is on or is being tried or whatever who just recently broke into somebody’s shop and he is using marijuana [Key informant, Tivoli].”

One informant from River Road added that poly-drug use among some young people increases the individual’s aggression and need for drugs.

“Most of the guys that smoke marijuana smoke other things that make them more aggressive such as crack or cocaine and that in itself can cause them to steal to maintain their habit [Key informant, River Road].”

It was further stated that use of marijuana increases the appetite of the user. Stealing therefore occurs to support these additional food cravings.

“I will certainly say so. In particular I have lived in this community and I speak to a lot of people who use marijuana and one of the things a lot of people say to you is that after they smoke marijuana they become very hungry, and you are hungry, you’re not working, some of them do not have the food at their home so bet you bottom dollar they gonna look for it where they could get it. Additionally you smoke the $10, $15, $20 that you had today, and you want to smoke more of this stuff, because for you now that is the most important thing, and you want to smoke tomorrow please God, and you have to find a means of getting it, they going to steal, whether its from somebody’s garden to get things to sell to buy the drugs or whether is going in somebody’s shop or place to get the money directly [Community informant, Tivoli].”

Notwithstanding these deviant behaviours, one informant reported that marijuana induced stealing has significantly decreased due to the ease of obtaining money through fishing in Gouyave.

“But as I tell you is different in Gouyave you might find 1 out of 10 persons doing crime to support the habit because the majority get they money from the sea [Key informant, Gouyave].”
3.3.4.2 Drug trafficking

Various reports were provided by informants regarding young people’s involvement in drug trafficking.

Two informants from Gouyave and Tivoli were unsure of the target group’s involvement in drug trafficking.

“I don’t know. I know in Gouyave there are people who maybe involved in drug trafficking, I’m not so sure if the teenage boys are involved in the drug trafficking, I know they are involved in the drug use, but the young people in their 20’s and 30’s and there are some older ones to who are involved in the drug trafficking, and in gouyave some people know who they are but they won’t say [Key informant, Gouyave].”

The majority of informants were of the belief that most young people are not involved in inter-island drug trafficking. This is because the majority of Cannabis is imported from St. Vincent.

“Well what ah could say we don’t have no drug traffickers around here. The guys from St. Vincent does come with weed, and fellers does buy [Community informant, Gouyave].”

Secondly, a few informants reported that young people are not normally involved in drug trafficking due to the high risk involved, and the lack of financial resources available to the youth to support this business. Therefore, drug trafficking is mostly conducted by adults.

“I believe most of the drug trafficking is done by older folks, I would say people in their 30’s, 40’s. It’s kind of a risky business to be involved in drug trafficking and I believe you have to have a certain amount of wealth. I believe the trafficking is for older folks, the more mature [Community informant, Tivoli].”

The informants added that young people are primarily involved in purchasing and consuming; not trafficking.

“Not the younger set, the younger set don’t do that, they don’t sell for other people, only the bigger ones, the young ones only smoke it [Key informant, Woburn]”

It should be noted though that two informants from Woburn and Gouyave were of the opinion that some young people are involved in internal drug trafficking. In particular, they act as middle men to reduce the possibility of the chief drug trafficker getting caught by law enforcement officers.

“What you might find is a bigger man might use a young person maybe to go and pick up weed in Victoria for him and bring it back home because if somebody see him they might say he going and buy weed, so he bring the youth man, buy the stuff, put the youth man
on a bus with it and take the other bus. It does work out in some cases, is mostly among the older persons who sometimes use the young persons [Key informant, Gouyave].”

3.3.4 Perception of preventative programmes

Informants were aware of a few initiatives implemented to prevent drug use among youths. One informant applauded the Project Strong programme implemented by the Youth Department, Ministry of Youths, Sports and Community Development which targeted young out-of-school males. Albeit this, the informant was doubtful of the effectiveness of this initiative in assisting youths in Gouyave, due to the challenge of overcoming the embedded fishing culture (Refer to Section 3.3.2).

“You could bring a cow in the river to drink water and it en have to drink. The majority of young fellers is the sea they go by; is a faster income for them. So it en easy to pick up fellers here and put them in an institution to learn a skill, but the government could try, it might not work in Gouyave, but elsewhere [Key informant, Gouyave].”

On average though, most of the other informants identified weaknesses in programmes implemented, which they believed significantly curtailed their effectiveness.

In fact, two informants from Gouyave and Woburn noted that the programs are not creating the desired results intended as evident by the increased usage of marijuana among young people in the community.

“I am not seeing any positive effects because there is just more and more young people becoming involved in drugs [Key informant, Gouyave].”

Informants indicated that the programs are not designed to address the issues impacting youths. This is because the developers of the programs have not used drugs and/or are unsure of the best approaches for prevention and/or interventions.

“I don’t think the programs are tackling the issue. It’s easy to put programs together, but I believe when you put programs together you have to take the individual into consideration because most of the time the people who come up with these ideas are people who have never used drugs, so they have no clue what these people go through and how to tackle it, so I think this is one of the reasons why these programs fail and young people lose interest in it [Key informant, Woburn].”
Furthermore, one informant from River Road added that the media used to disseminate the messages of prevention are inappropriate, and as such, the target audience is not positively impacted. The informant added that more emphasis should be placed on using music to create desired attitudinal and behavioural changes.

“Yes they may be things on television, but these guys are not home to look at television, they on the block, maybe if they have more messages in songs, that’s their medium they listen to some music that encourage them to smoke, maybe if they listen to some that would discourage them or people coming straight up to talk. They understand the music, they interact with it, so maybe if you could use the same medium to discourage them because they not home to sit and watch the program on drug avoidance, they not home, they liming on the bloc...[Key informant, River Road].”

The problem of programme continuity was also highlighted as an area of concern.

“I think it should be a continuous thing, they should have people coming to the class every year. So when these children have graduated what will become of those coming in [Key informant, Tivoli].”

3.3.5 Ideas for Preventing Marijuana Use

Various ideas were proposed by informants to address the problems of marijuana use among out-of-school youths.

3.3.5.1 Public awareness and education programmes

Informants from three communities strongly advocated the implementation of anti-drug use education within the school’s curriculum, due to the immeasurable positive impact that academic instructions can have on the student. Moreover, informants stressed that these programmes should emphasize the reasons why marijuana should not be consumed.

“We need to get into the schools; that’s where we really need to influence the children. I think a lot of children are being told not to use marijuana, I’m not sure they are being told why, what are the effects, what is going to happen to you if you use marijuana, and they are at the age where they are very curious, they want to know more, they hearing a lot of things they don’t understand, they hearing two sides of the story, so what we have to tell them is not just don’t use marijuana but why [Key informant, Tivoli].”

Attempting to prevent drug use among youths after they complete formal education would be extremely challenging, and in some cases impossible as indicated by the informant from Gouyave.

“They have to try that from the school because if they don’t try that from the school it go just be a waste because everybody smoking marijuana [Community informant, Gouyave].”

Two informants suggested that drug prevention education should focus heavily on students between 12 – 14 years old.
Respondents also proposed the implementation of awareness and education programs outside the educational institution. They suggested, though, that these programmes should be developed in close collaboration with key stakeholders including but not limited to ex-drug users or persons who understand the issues pertaining to drug use among youths. This is critical to the success of these programmes in creating a desired change among the target audience.

“To me if they have to be any effective programs to help these young people I would prefer it come from people who have been in the situation [Community informant, Woburn].”

One informant stated that such educational programs should also be organized for young parents to prepare them to better guide their children.

“Maybe you could have a session with parents themselves because most of the parents are teenagers themselves and lack knowledge [Key informant, Tivoli].”

3.3.5.2 Implement constructive alternative activities at the community level

Informants from Gouyave, Tivoli and Woburn suggested that a very strong focus should be placed on providing alternative constructive activities for youths at the community level, for instance, youth based programs, sports and creative arts.

“I think we need to get more youth based programs, debates, sporting activities…Because we have a lot of athletes here but they drop out of school and that’s the end of them, they join the band and that’s it, so they need to be more activities that they can get involve in [Key informant, Gouyave].”

Some informants advised that the necessary infrastructure be developed to support sporting activities that have been previously established.

“There used to be the football team, but right now since the park is not done there isn’t much avenue for sporting activities [Key informant, Gouyave].”

One informant suggested that special programs should be organized during the vacation periods to channel youth energies into positive activities. Similarly, two informants from Woburn and River Road encouraged remedial programs for example, in writing, for the target group in an effort to improve their employability and self esteem.

3.3.5.3 Increase emphasis on spiritual growth

Two informants proposed the need for greater spiritual development for young people, due to the positive impact of the church in heightening awareness of the need to preserve and protect one’s body.

“Maybe if we have more spiritual involvement that may help because the children who go to the churches they tend to stay away from drugs, those who don’t go are the ones
who are most at risk of getting involved in drugs because they in all activities [Key informant, Gouyave].”

3.3.5.4 Improve law enforcement

Informants proposed improving surveillance at the ports of entry in an effort to reduce the supply and availability of drugs locally (Refer to Section 3.1.8.2).

“I believe that we are at a situation where we don’t grow much marijuana in Grenada, it seems to be coming from the outside. If we cut it out, then there will be less for us to use. So firstly we have to tighten our security, especially at night on the sea, cut it out, make sure marijuana does not get into the country; when it does not get into the country, the youths cannot get it to use [Key informant, Tivoli].”

Moreover, one informant believed that some effort must be made to ensure effective consistent enforcement of the laws pertaining to possession of marijuana.

“We have to set the record straight, are persons allowed to use marijuana? We have to institute some proper measures. You are using marijuana, you have to be fined or imprisoned or whatever the case may be, you have to deal with it severely. The lighter the punishment the more chances people will take so you must be prepared to put down some stiffer penalties and cut out the marijuana from coming to Grenada [Key informant, Tivoli].”

3.3.5.5 Active involvement of community in youth development

The notion was expressed by two informants that the community should play an active role in youth development. In particular, the adult populace should be ethical and display acceptable standards. This is necessary since young people tend to adopt the lifestyle of the older generation; therefore, change must begin with the adults.

“If we want to clean up that thing we have to start from the ground, we can’t start with the young people, they are just duplicates, carbon copies, they just basically follow what they see, so they are not the problem, the problem is us adults, how we living our lives as role models. The people in society that they look up to they have this mixed lifestyle so the young people is not the problem and if you want to solve the drug problem you have to start with the big people [Key informant, Woburn].”

Secondly, community members should endeavor to forge better relationship with the youths and take an active interest in their development.

3.4 NATIONAL INFORMANTS INTERVIEWS

3.4.1 Perception of Drug Problem

The national informants confirmed the existence of a drug problem among out-of-school youths. Both agreed that usage most likely commences between the period 11 – 14 years (Refer to Section 3.1.3.1 and 3.3.1.1).
3.4.2 Reasons for Marijuana Use

A number of reasons were proposed by national informants for marijuana use among out of school youths.

3.4.2.1 Experimentation (Refer to Section 3.1.5.6)

Both informants explained that the onset of puberty encourages experimentation, which can lead to drug use. One informant added that at this transforming stage, youths are not particularly concerned about the implications of an action; rather they are driven by the ultimate impact.

“You have to remember first of all that at the age of 11 a young person becomes an adolescent and they tend to experiment, especially young men...they looking for something to become mature, and whatever they see in the community they want to see whether or not it’s for them. They don’t look at the dangers and so on, they looking at what it could do for them [National informant].”

3.4.2.2 Influence of parents and elders

It was clearly expressed by one national informant that many youths become involved in drug use due to the influence of parents and/or elders (Refer to Sections 3.1.5.3 and 3.3.2). In particular, many parents use drugs openly in front of their children, and in some cases are even involved in the drug trade. This socialization increases the probability that a child will use the illicit substance since it is an integral aspect of his/her social context.

“Maybe some of the older folks use it in the home, you have parents who deal with drugs, pushing drugs and things like that, and children see that so they get directly involved. It is difficult to do one thing and expect your children to do something else because they want to know why is mommy and daddy selling drugs and telling them it en good, so they get involve through all those avenues [National informant].”

Additionally, youth involvement in selling drugs also provides numerous opportunities for use.

“Sometimes they get into it from their elders because of sale. Most time they start selling like in school or on the block; that is how they get into it [National informant].”

It was asserted by one informant that the career orientation of parents is seriously diminishing time available for parent-child communication. Due to the burdens of employment, parents are normally very tired, hindering fruitful interaction within the home. Children therefore feel neglected, and can turn to drugs to overcome these depressing feelings.

“What you find along the line is that things get neglected, when she get home on evening time she is too tired so she don’t have enough time to spend with the children at home; daddy tired, mommy tired. During the day both of us gone to work [National Informant].”
The above problem is exacerbated due to the minimal influence of extended family members in the child’s development. To this end, children are left unsupervised for long periods, which provide the ideal circumstances for drug use.

“Grandma is old and she not able to take up that responsibility…the young grandmas you have now, they too young to take up that responsibility, so it is very difficult. I think it is a very dangerous thing in one sense when you have both parties working so there is lack of supervision [National informant].”

Disrupted family structures were identified as a major contributing factor to drug use. In fact, one informant indicated that in some instances conflicting messages are disseminated by frustrated parents to their children leading to confusion in the minds of the offsprings.

“The students may come from a broken family unit, mother and father divorce and that could cause frustration and you have a lot of young people who grow up with a mother alone and the kinds of things that the mother preach more or less is against the father and she preach it to the son because the son looks so much like the father and all that corrupts the minds of the children [National informant].”

3.4.2.3 Unemployment and idleness

The high unemployment rate among the target audience allows for a significant amount of free time, which ultimately leads to smoking (Refer to Sections 3.1.5.2 and 3.3.2).

“One of the things you have to look at to is unemployment, there are some youths who feel they are unemployed and they feel ok they get into this group and they may enjoy themselves, enjoy the day, go to the beach, or go somewhere and cook and the coolest thing is to smoke a joint, they have nothing else to do [National informant].”

In an effort to curb the unemployment problems youths become involve in the drug trade as a means of supporting themselves financially.

“Another thing with unemployment is that they get involve in marijuana to generate an income, that is why the majority of them smoke it and sell it and so, just to make a ends meet [National informant].”

3.4.2.4 Youths’ perception of marijuana

According to both informants, one of the major reasons promoting marijuana use among youths is the fact that youths do not perceive marijuana as a drug (Refer to Section 3.1.2). One key informant noted that marijuana is viewed as ‘a herb of life.’

“Most people don’t consider it (marijuana) a drug, some people feel that marijuana is a herb, and herb are not drugs, that’s a definition some people use [National informant].”

Another informant added that society supports the above belief, by disseminating the idea that although marijuana is a drug, it is not a dangerous drug. The focus is therefore on the few supposedly limited benefits that marijuana offers, with insignificant attention
being placed on its many detrimental impacts. This produces a biased perspective to the youth regarding the implications of marijuana use.

“You find that people in the society preach a lot of things that make young people believe that marijuana is a drug but not a dangerous drug, they would give you 8/9 reasons why it good for use but on the other hand they not giving you the 99 reasons why it is detrimental to you, so a lot of young people while they use it they might be aware yes it is a drug but its not a dangerous substance and it can affect them [National informant].”

### 3.4.2.5 Low self esteem

Both informants noted that the problem of low self esteem among many young people is a major driving force for drug use (Refer to Section 3.3.2).

“Then there is the issue of low self esteem. Many of our young people do not believe in themselves, their poor self image provides the impetus for getting away from their problems, though temporarily by using drugs [National informant].”

One informant noted that some young people believe that marijuana can improve their capability for social interaction.

“I remember talking to a young Rasta man some time ago and I asked him why he smokes marijuana and he was telling me when he smokes he can speak to anybody, have a more manly talk with them. So I ask now that you speaking to me and you’re not smoking how do you feel, he said I feel alright but maybe if I take two pull ah would have been able to talk to you better [National informant].”

The informant added that this problem of poor self worth in many instances is linked to dysfunctional homes.

“This self esteem problem could be linked to home problems since this is an area of concern on the island. Parents are not been responsible enough for their children [National informant].”

### 3.4.2.6 Peer pressure

Peer pressure provides a formidable force for initiating marijuana use among young people (Refer to Sections 3.1.5.1 and 3.3.2).

“Young people try marijuana for the first time because a friend encouraged them, telling them that it is okay to use. The influence of peers is immense and this is one of our major problems regarding marijuana use [National informant].”

### 3.4.2.7 The influence of the media and music

The powerful influence of the media on the decision making processes of the youths was noted as a factor promoting marijuana use. The Black Entertainment Television which is highly viewed by the target audience is a major promoter of marijuana. This is because
the programs on this station glorify immorality and deviant behaviours, thus instilling an unconscious acceptance of such lifestyle patterns among the youthful populace.

“The television could play a contributing factor to that also because you watching television and you tend to watch movies and adopt this sort of foreign culture, if you take for example one of the most featured program in Grenada today is what you call BET, and I remember about 2/3 times taking the time out to look at BET to see what’s really happening and believe you me I am really confused of this whole thing. The thing is that BET makes that which is immoral appear to be so good to society. Although it’s a black program it sickens you because you know the dangers of the whole thing, a lot of people believe that it is alright to go out there and smoke marijuana because they see it happening [National informant].”

3.4.3 Link Between Marijuana and Risky Behaviour

Both informants agreed that marijuana induces risky behaviour among young people due to the fact that it affects their ability to make rationale decisions. One informant noted that although the individual might be quiet under the influence of the drug, the violence remains inside, and under frustrating circumstances can be exhibited.

“So there you have a situation at times where it would be very quiet but even if the quietness is there, there is violence inside [National informant].”

3.4.4 Link Between Marijuana and Crime

There was the consensus that marijuana use encourages criminal activities. One informant noted that possession of marijuana is a crime; so from this perspective youths are in fact involved in criminal behaviours.

One informant noted that marijuana is the precursor of criminal activities among youths.

“Before these young people get into crime, they do the drugs first [National informant].”

Both informants expressed the belief that youths steal to maintain their drug habits. The problem of unemployment also encourages this practice.

“Young people using marijuana need to support the habit. Although one joint is fairly cheap, repeated use among a population that sometimes is not working can lead them to seek other means of supporting that habit. To this end, in some instances these young people will commit petty theft to be able to purchase marijuana. There is a tendency for these people to steal from neighbours gardens and maybe even their homes [National informant].”

One informant noted that some young people get involved in internal drug trafficking operations. They are used as conveyers and/or observers.

“Regarding trafficking, the issue of concern relates to internal trafficking. Young people might be used as look out men to ensure that the deal is implemented safely. They might
3.4.5 Effectiveness of Prevention Programmes

Both informants supported the notion that much is being done to prevent marijuana use among the youths. They noted, though, that although positives results are observable, inconsistency, fuelled by limited financial resources, are hindering large scale effectiveness of organized prevention programmes.

“I think as a nation, a lot is been done regarding prevention, and to a large extent they are effective. What we need to continue doing is maintaining consistency in what we are doing and try not to start and stop. But you see, producing these awareness programs are very costly and at times the cost for media promotion is also very high. But I think to a large extent the programs are effective, a lot is being done at the school, media etc [National informant].”

One informant noted though that in some cases the programs are not very effective due to the insufficient effort of implementing agencies in impacting the hard-to-reach population.

“No, not as strongly as we hope...At the same time, I don’t believe the organizations try hard enough since reaching out to young people is pretty challenging [National informant].”

One informant remarked that the ineffectiveness is not because of insufficient work done; rather it is largely due to the fact that the youths are not listening to the messages disseminated.

“It is effective but the big difference is how much of them are willing to listen [National informant].”

3.4.6 Ideas for prevention

Central to the prevention strategy is the need to maintain consistency in programming.

3.4.6.1 Public awareness and education

Public awareness and education was identified as a pivotal intervention for preventing drug use. It was clearly expressed that a major campaign should be implemented to eradicate the myth that marijuana is not a drug.

“One of the biggest things I think we need to do is to ensure that young people understand that marijuana is a drug and that it is detrimental to their health. We need to address this myth that it is the herb of life [National informant].”
3.4.6.2 Alternative activities

The need for alternative constructive activities was strongly proposed by one informant as a means of engaging youths in a productive manner (Refer to Section 3.3.5.2).

“We should have youth groups and sporting activities, a continuous sporting program where you practice ball or whatever the case may be, so you can get the youths involved instead of having them idle and getting involve in drug use [National informant].”

Increased involvement of the church in community development was also noted as a formidable force in the battle against marijuana use. It was noted though that the church needed to broaden its outreach to those who are not necessarily confirming to its mission.

“Spiritualism has to be more effective. I believe that many of the churches today place more emphasis on their particular religion than look at the spiritual side of people’s lives and actually try to help. So most time, you find some of the churches who might be involved in drug programs, yet you find them placing very little emphasis on the boys in the ghetto, they place all emphasis on the people who are inside the church [National informant].”

3.4.6.3 Effective law enforcement

One informant agreed that the limited human resources of the Royal Grenada Police Force is hindering effective law enforcement. Notwithstanding this, the informant added that the measures adopted by the Force to monitor marijuana usage at international concerts should be enforced and maintained permanently.
4.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research commissioned by the Drug Control Secretariat as part of the Caribbean Drug Information Network capacity building Project, seeks to understand the perception of marijuana use and resultant behavioural patterns among out of school youths between the ages of 13 – 19 years. The study conducted in two rural (Tivoli and Gouyave) and two urban (River Road and Woburn) communities employed a qualitative research paradigm due to its exploratory nature. Specifically, the principal data collection strategies included focus group discussions, key informant interviews and content analysis of secondary data. It is the goal of the implementing agency that this study would provide the information needed to develop effective and appropriate interventions to reduce the incidence of marijuana use and interrelated problems among the target group.

This section summarizes the main findings of this study. Results are summarized under the following headings: definition of a drug; perception of marijuana; marijuana consumption patterns; marijuana induced behaviours; reasons for marijuana use; link between use of marijuana and crime; views on prevention measures and proposed strategies for preventing marijuana consumption.

4.1 DEFINITION OF A DRUG

- Two schools of thought were provided by focus group participants regarding the meaning of a drug. Some participants from all groups defined a drug as a substance that had medicinal properties while other participants viewed a drug as a substance that negatively affects human health.

- Some participants who reported the former definition indicated that the misuse of drugs can lead to a number of physiological and mental health problems.

- There were no significant differences in the definition of a drug provided by urban and rural participants.

4.2 PERCEPTION OF MARIJUANA

- Some participants were of the firm belief that marijuana is not a drug because of the following reasons:

  ✓ It promotes positive attitudes and behaviours. Specifically, it
    - relaxes the individual, and does not stimulate negative behaviours,
    - it deters young people from getting involved in criminal activities and other deviant behaviours, and
    - it encourages productive social relationships;

  ✓ It improves an individual’s socio-economic status;
It is a powerful medicine.

- On the other hand, some individuals expressed the belief that marijuana is a drug due to the detrimental effect on human health.

- A few participants from River Road indicated that marijuana could be a negative influence, since possession can lead to confrontation with the legal system.

- Generally, participants from the urban communities were more likely to state that marijuana is a drug, while participants from the rural areas were least likely to do so.

- Females were more likely to indicate that marijuana is a drug when compared to males. However, female participants from Gouyave were just as likely as males to point out that marijuana is not a drug.

4.3 MARIJUANA CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

4.3.1 Age of Initiation

- Respondents reported that there is no ideal age for young people to begin using marijuana. Initiation can begin as early as nine (9) years or as late as nineteen (19) years.

- On average though, most out of school youths begin to smoke marijuana between the age range of 12-14 years.

- Respondents from Gouyave and to a lesser extent Woburn were more likely to begin using marijuana earlier than average, while those from Tivoli were more likely to delay the onset of initiation. Fear of getting into conflict with law enforcement officials was the main reason provided for the delayed commencement among youths in Tivoli.

4.3.2 Consumption Patterns

- Respondents reported that consumption of marijuana appeared to be increasing in all communities.

- Two groups of smokers were identified based on pattern of use. Some participants smoked occasionally, for instance, once, twice or three times weekly. A few participants practicing this mode of use explained that an understanding of the negative effect of specific concentrations of marijuana on an individual’s mental health, limits frequency of consumption.

- On the other hand, some participants smoked continuously during the day, similar to that of a chain smoker. Chain smoking appeared to be linked to unemployment and interacting in a group environment.
Out of school youths from Gouyave and Woburn tended to smoke more regularly than out of school youths from River Road and Tivoli.

Major reggae shows, sporting activities and places of relaxation in the community were identified as locations for high drug use among youths.

4.3.3 Gender and Consumption Patterns

Males were much more likely to consume marijuana than females. Notwithstanding this, all communities reported that marijuana is consumed by females, although to a lesser extent.

The study revealed that a greater percentage of females in Gouyave consumed marijuana when compared to females in the other three communities.

4.4 MARIJUANA INDUCED BEHAVIOUR

4.4.1 General Behavioral Patterns

Based on the results of the study, young people displayed varying behavioural patterns after consuming marijuana. Some users tended to become withdrawn and quiet, while others erratic and even dangerous.

Respondents reported a number of general behaviours which are commonly demonstrated by marijuana users. These include:

✓ Rebellion and disobedient, especially to parents;
✓ calm and withdrawn;
✓ increased energy and heighten mood;
✓ increased appetite; and
✓ a heightened tendency to sleep.

4.4.2 Link between Marijuana Use and Risky Behaviour

4.4.2.1 Violence

Focus group participants from Gouyave and Woburn were adamant that marijuana use does not encourage violent behaviour among young people. Participants explained that violence among youths occurs because of the following reasons: negative thinking of the individual; idleness; lack of education and attention deficit problems experienced by some youths.

Some participants from Tivoli and River Road refuted the above claim stating that marijuana promotes violence among young people. They added that marijuana
encouraged young people to act in a dangerous and unpredictable manner which can lead to interpersonal conflict, and ultimately violence. All key informants except one from Gouyave supported the above claim on the basis that marijuana hinders effective decision making.

- Participants from River Road noted that many marijuana users that appeared to be dangerous are not as strong as they think they are, since marijuana slows down the nervous system and associated coordination mechanisms.

- In general, participants from Gouyave and Woburn were more apt to indicate that marijuana does not encourage violent behaviour, while participants from River Road and Tivoli were more apt to believe otherwise. All key informants except one individual from Gouyave agreed with the perspective that marijuana stimulates violent behaviour among youths.

### 4.4.2.2 Risky sexual behaviour

- Participants from all focus groups excluding Gouyave expressed the belief that marijuana consumption among youths promotes risky sexual behaviour, such as unprotected and recreational sex.

- It is interesting to note that a few participants from Woburn indicated that under the influence of marijuana, pregnancy and/or HIV/AIDS are not perceived as important and/or dangerous issues.

- Participants from River Road noted that some young persons under the influence of marijuana are more inclined to attempt rape and murder, particularly among senior citizens and young females.

- All informants interviewed concurred that use of marijuana increases risky sexual behaviour among young people.

### 4.5 REASONS FOR MARIJUANA USE

Use of marijuana among out of school youths was motivated by a number of influencing factors. As illustrated in Table 1, the factors most commonly reported for promoting marijuana use among out of school youths included peer pressure; influence of parents and guardians; influence of music and musical artists; unemployment and idleness; limited community facilities for young people and the perceived importance of marijuana.
Table 1: Comparative analysis of reasons for marijuana use as reported by research subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for use</th>
<th>Focus group participants</th>
<th>Community key informant</th>
<th>National informant</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment, idleness and limited community facilities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived usefulness of marijuana</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Need to experiment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of parents/guardians</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of music and musical artists</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthlessness</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unexplained reason</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influence of role models</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited involvement of community in youth development</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessibility of marijuana</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payment for purchasing marijuana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of the fishing culture in Gouyave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation/sensation it creates</td>
<td></td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disrespect for the law</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low self esteem</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.6 CRIME AND MARIJUANA USE

- The study revealed that respondents from Gouyave, Woburn and Tivoli were more apt to indicate that marijuana use does not encourage crime among young people. Rather, they proposed that consumption of marijuana promotes individualism, a healthy body and stimulation of positive attitudes and behaviour among the subgroup.

- Some participants from Gouyave believed that use of cocaine can lead to criminal activities, for instance stealing.
Any criminal activities undertaken by young people according to participants from Gouyave are linked to the dominant influence of television and rap music. Young people, they asserted, get involved in criminal actions to obtain financial resources necessary to mimic the materialistic oriented lifestyle of many musical artists.

Respondents from River Road and to a lesser extent Tivoli were more apt to believe that marijuana use among young people encouraged criminal activities in particular stealing and violence. Stealing, they added is really done to support the marijuana habit of the user.

Some participants from River Road recognized the fact that possession of marijuana is in fact a breach of the criminal code. They added that possession of marijuana is only the start of a long process of criminal activity among the youth.

It should be noted that one participant from Tivoli disagreed with the notion that youths steal to support their marijuana habit. This is because marijuana is very affordable. The participant commented that stealing to support one’s drug habit is normally done by the cocaine user, not the marijuana user.

Generally, all key informants reported that marijuana use increases the likelihood of criminal activities due to the reduction of an individual’s reasoning capacity. Stealing was the chief law breaking activity identified by informants. Regarding drug trafficking, the majority of informants were of the opinion that young people are not involved in inter-island drug trafficking. It is possible though that some young people are involved in internal drug trafficking, in particular, acting as middle men and women to conceal the drug trafficking operation.

4.7 PREVENTION OF MARIJUANA USE

4.7.1 Knowledge of Prevention Programmes

Participants had only a vague idea of the drug use prevention programmes implemented nationally.

Focus group participants identified the following drug use prevention programmes: the Drug Abuse Resistance Education initiative; the anti-drug jingle developed by the Drug Control Secretariat in collaboration with UNESCO; the RBTT Young Leaders programme and unnamed activities organized by youth groups.

4.7.2 Views on Effectiveness

A few participants indicated that the programs are effective since they do play a major role in sensitizing the target audience about the seriousness of drug use. On the other hand, the majority of participants were more inclined to believe that the programmes are not effective largely because they do not maintain the interest of
the target group, they do not seriously convince the youth that they are a valuable component of the population, and they are not sufficiently effective in highlighting the effects of the drug use on human health.

- Most informants, although they applauded the efforts of past initiatives identified a number of weaknesses inherent in planned programs which have hindered the attainment of desired results. Key weaknesses identified included:
  - Programs have not been developed by persons who understand the issues faced by the youth at risk, and as such, do not garner the interest of the out of school youth;
  - The media used to disseminate the messages of prevention are inappropriate and ineffective in creating the desired impact;
  - Programs lack continuity; and
  - Limited financial resources available for demand reduction programmes have affective quality and quantity of intervention strategies.

4.7.3 Strategies for Preventing Consumption

The research subjects provided a number of strategies which they viewed as critical in addressing the challenges of marijuana use among out of school youth. Strategies include:

4.7.3.1 Combating idleness, unemployment and poverty

- Establish a resource centre at the community level for young people. This centre should provide a number of alternative recreational activities for youths, while also providing skills training to improve employability and overall self esteem. It is important to note that the implementation of alternative activities can be done in isolation of an established community resource centre.

- Develop industries where raw materials are produced in high quantities as a means of addressing poverty among parents.

- Establish a system for accountable and transparent community assistance for young people.

4.7.3.2 Improve national law enforcement capacity

- Encourage the law enforcement officers to govern by example.
- Implement more effective enforcement of the laws governing possession and use of marijuana.
- Improve surveillance generally, with specific emphasis on the points of entry.
- Monitor marijuana use at areas where it is heavily used, for instance, reggae concerts.

4.7.3.3 Public awareness and education

- Develop a public awareness and education strategy targeting both in school and out of school youths.
- School based programs should be prioritized due to their potential for stimulating the development of anti-drug use attitudes and behaviour among young people in a controlled environment.
- In school programs should concentrate heavily on persons between the ages of 12 – 14 years, since this group is considered as the most vulnerable to marijuana use.
- A central message of the public awareness and education strategy should be: Marijuana is a drug which can negatively affect human health.
- Programmes should be designed to secure the interest of the youth. To this end, the target audience and persons who have overcome drug use problems should be actively involved in developing and implementing such programmes.
- Special programs should be organized for young parents to assist in the development of effective parental skills.

4.7.3.4 Increased emphasis on spiritual growth

- Some informants promoted greater spiritual development for young people due to the positive impact of the church in encouraging ethical and moral behaviours.

4.7.3.5 Active involvement of the community in youth development

- Respondents stated that adults should play a major role in empowering young people at the community level by:
  - demonstrating high standards;
  - forging better relationships with the youth; and
  - becoming actively involved in youth development.
4.8 SPECIAL NEEDS

- Participants identified a number of needs that should be made available to the target audience if planned actions are expected to create certain preferred outcomes. These included:
  - provide counselors that are accessible and approachable to the youth;
  - develop programs to improve the home environments of the youth; and
  - provide financial assistance to disadvantage young people.

4.9 CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

The current environment that exists within the four target communities is not fully conducive for the prevention of marijuana among out of school youths. This section summarizes the constraints and needs that are presently hindering out of school youths to effectively resist marijuana in rural and urban communities.

- Misinformation or lack of knowledge on the impacts of marijuana on human health;

- An unsupportive socio-cultural environment in which the target group resides. In particular, high levels of poverty and unemployment; limited and/or no parental guidance and emotional support; limited involvement of the community in youth development and promotion of social norms that are inconsistent with prevention of marijuana use;

- Inadequate law enforcement at the national and community levels.

Addressing the above constraints would be instrumental in reducing the incidence of marijuana use among out of school youths. The subsequent chapter presents an action plan for addressing these constraints faced by out of school youths.
5.0 ACTION PLAN

5.1 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Action Plan is:

_to reduce the incidence of marijuana use among out of school youths between the ages of 13 – 19 years in urban and rural communities in Grenada, through the use of public awareness and education, improvement of the socio-cultural environment and the augmentation of national capacity for more effective drug supply and demand reduction._

5.2 GOAL

The primary goal of the Action Plan is to reduce the incidence of marijuana use among out of school youths between the ages of 13 – 19 years in rural and urban communities in Grenada over a 5 year period.

5.3 OBJECTIVES

- Promote broad base support for primary prevention of marijuana use among the target group;
- Develop and implement initiatives that would improve the socioeconomic status of the target group;
- Encourage the development of a supportive social and cultural environment to meet the physical, social, spiritual and psychological needs of the out of school youth.
- Promote the implementation of more effective strategies for reducing the supply and availability of marijuana.

5.4 STRATEGIES
Increase public awareness and education on the importance of being drug free, and on the negative impacts of marijuana use on human health;

Increase personal development programs aimed at empowering the youth to make wise decisions. Such programs should cater to the peculiarities of the out of school youth, and should be easily accessible;

Establish and maintain strategic partnerships with positive influential individuals and organizations at both the community and national levels;

Establish and maintain a programme for enhancing the employment capability of out of school youth;

Enhance the capacity of the law enforcement entities to ensure more effective and efficient reduction of the supply and availability of marijuana.

5.5 ACTIONS

Develop and implement a long term public awareness strategy targeting both in school and out of school youths using a multitude of media that are appropriate and effective for the target groups. The campaign should focus on the following areas:

- What constitutes a drug;
- Myths surrounding the impact of marijuana on human health;
- The effect of marijuana use on the human body;
- Benefits (both tangible and intangible) of remaining marijuana free;
- Laws and penalties enacted to address possession of a controlled substance;
- Coping skills and stress management
- Dealing with peer pressure.

Develop and implement a series of alternative activities at the community level that would provide opportunities for young people to safely occupy their time, while interacting constructively. Examples include sporting activities, music concerts and community resource centers to name a few.

Develop and implement a peer counselors programme focused on personal development designed for the out-of-school youth.

Facilitate the development and implementation of a sustainable employment program for out of school youths. Preceding this, an investigation should be conducted to ascertain why some youths are not interested in work. The information provided from this study would inform the development of the employment programme.
The implementation of programmes geared towards poverty reduction at the community level should be prioritized. This would be significant in building more supportive homes, while also reversing the readily and seemingly acceptable attitude towards marijuana trafficking for income generation and/or employment.

Strengthen and/or build partnerships with existing community organizations, institutions and individuals to promote the social and economic development of the out-of-school youth.

Promote where possible the inclusion of drug prevention education in the work programme of community based organizations and institutions, example, schools, youth groups, churches, Non-governmental organizations etc.

Develop and implement a sustainable social support system for out of school youths, in particular the one’s whose home environment is not conducive for positive development.

Increase the visible presence of law enforcement officers at the community level and at the ports of entry.

Promote more aggressive public relations by the law enforcement agencies regarding the seriousness of possession of an illicit substance, and also the benefits for the individual of refraining from such actions.

Develop and implement an incentive scheme for law enforcement officers that encourage ethical behaviours, especially when dealing with illicit substances.

Establish a neighbourhood watch programme in all communities.

Raise the community’s perception of the Royal Grenada Police Force by promoting greater involvement of the force in community activities.

In an effort to foster continuity and effectiveness of the above objectives, an evaluation plan should be developed at the onset of implementation, and systematically monitored.

5.6 TACTICS

Interventions, particularly the ones that would impact the youth directly should be developed and implemented in collaboration with the out of school youth.

Public awareness events should use media that have been proven to reach the youth;

Sustainability and continuity of programs are very critical in achieving the challenging task of subverting marijuana use and associated risky behaviours among youth. There is need therefore to identify resources and funding to sustain
meaningful programmes to foster behavioural modification into positive attitudes and thus healthy lifestyles among young people.

- Messages disseminated should be clear, consistent and factual.

- The out of school youth should be treated with respect and professionalism at all times.

- Knowledge and empowerment, rather than fear should be the central guiding principle of the action plan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX 1

FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH GUIDE

Perception of drug use
1. What do you consider to be a drug? Do you consider marijuana to be a drug? Let’s discuss this?
2. Do young people that are not attending school use marijuana in your community? Let’s discuss marijuana use among youths in your community (age of initiation; frequency; places or activities that encourage use; source etc).
3. What are your views on marijuana use among youths in your community?
4. What do you think of marijuana use among youths in your community?
5. Why do young people that are not attending school in your community use marijuana?

Effects of marijuana use on behaviour patterns

6. Let’s discuss the effects of marijuana use on youths behaviour (try to ascertain the difference if any between perception of behaviour and actual behaviour).

✓ Do you believe that use of marijuana increases the risk of violent behaviour? Give reasons and/or actual examples if possible for your answer.
✓ Do you believe that use of marijuana increases the risk of having unprotected sex? Give reasons and/or actual examples for your answer.
✓ Are there any other risky behaviour/s encouraged by marijuana use? Let’s discuss these behaviours.

Perception of the link between crime and marijuana use

7. What do you understand by the term ‘crime?’
8. Share with us your views on the link between marijuana use among youths and crime in the community.

✓ Have you ever witnessed any crimes, violence or fights in your community or by young people living in your community? If yes, in your opinion, was this situation marijuana related?
✓ Are you aware of gangs in your community? If yes, is their behaviour marijuana related?
✓ What role does drug trafficking play in your community?

Views and ideas about prevention programmes

9. What do you know about programs or measures in place in Grenada (past and present) to address marijuana use among young people that are not attending school? Comment on their effectiveness.
10. What do you think needs to be done in your community/nationally to prevent young people from using marijuana? Why do you say that?
11. Who do you think should be responsible for those plans?

Youths Needs
12. If the persons in authority in Grenada were to put together the best programs to prevent marijuana use/abuse among youths, are there other things that young people would need to ensure that they respond positively to these programs/measures? What are they?

13. Last comments

APPENDIX 2

COMMUNITY KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE
1. Share with us the current situation of marijuana use among out of school youths in your community (age of initiation; frequency; source; places or activities that encourage drug use; source).

2. Could you comment on the present trends of marijuana use in your community?

3. Share with us the reasons for marijuana use among out of school youths in your community.

4. Do you believe that marijuana use increases the potential for risky behaviour (for instance, violence, unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners) among out of school youths in your community? Give reasons and/or actual examples if possible for your answer.

5. Share with us your views on the link between marijuana use among out of school youths and crime in your community.

Possible probes:

✓ Have you ever witnessed any crimes committed by out of school youths in your community? If yes, in your opinion, was the situation marijuana related?
✓ Are you aware of gangs in your community? If yes, is their behaviour marijuana related?
✓ What role does drug trafficking play in your community?
✓ Do you believe that there is a link between drug trafficking and out of school youths?
✓ What are your views on the relationship between marijuana use among out of school youths and drug trafficking?

6. Could you share with us your perception about preventive measures used to combat marijuana use in your community and in particular among out-of school youths? Could you comment on the effectiveness of these programmes?

7. Could you share with us your ideas for preventing marijuana use among out of school youths in your community?

APPENDIX 3

NATIONAL INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE
1. Share with us the current situation of marijuana use among out of school youths in Grenada (age of initiation; frequency; source; places or activities that encourage drug use; source).

2. Could you comment on the present trends of marijuana use among out of school youths in Grenada?

3. Share with us the reasons for marijuana use among out of school youths in Grenada.

4. Do you believe that marijuana use increases the potential for risky behaviour (for instance, violence, unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners) among out of school youths? Give reasons and/or actual examples if possible for your answer.

5. Share with us your views on the link between marijuana use among out of school youths and crime in Grenada.

   Possible probes:
   ✓ Are you aware of any crimes committed by out of school youths? If yes, in your opinion, was the situation marijuana related?
   ✓ Are you aware of gangs in Grenada? If yes, is their behaviour marijuana related?
   ✓ Do you believe that there is a link between drug trafficking and out of school youths?
   ✓ What are your views on the relationship between marijuana use among out of school youths and drug trafficking?

6. Could you share with us your perception about preventive measures used nationally to combat marijuana use, in particular among out-of school youths? Could you comment on the effectiveness of these programmes?

7. Could you share with us your ideas for preventing marijuana use among out of school youths in Grenada?

APPENDIX 4

SELF ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE
1. Please write the name of your community

2. Please indicate your sex? Male [] Female []

3. How old are you? 

4. What is your highest level of education reached?
   - Primary []
   - Secondary []
   - Vocational []
   - Tertiary []

5. What is your work status?
   - Employed []
   - Unemployed []

6. What is your occupation?

6. With whom do you live?
   - Mother and father []
   - Mother only []
   - Father only []
   - Mother and stepfather []
   - Father and stepmother []
   - Grandmother []
   - Grand father []
   - Other relative []
   - Lives alone []
   - Other []

7. How would you describe your family economic situation?
   - Very good []
   - Good []
   - Fair []
   - Very bad []
   - Bad []

8. Have you ever used marijuana? Yes [] No []

9. If yes, have you used it in the last 12 months? Yes [] No []

APPENDIX 5

PERSONS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY
1. **FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

**Community: Tivoli**
- Natoya Ettienne
- Candian Wilson
- Yolanda Alexander
- Alvin Thomas
- Anderson Mc Donald
- Randy Mc Donald
- Randell Brizan
- Ackel Belfon

**Community: Woburn**
- Antonio Bell
- Keelon Pieere
- Jason Bell
- Deroy Mitchell
- Kesroy Watson
- Joel Payne
- Ed Williams

**Community: River Road**
- Shem Charles
- Nathaniel Warwood
- Antoinette Charles

(Did not get the proper names from other participants or from the site supervisor)

**Community: Gouyave**
- Jemina Lead
- Malika Smith
- Christel Hnry
- Lennon Marshal
- Aspersed Richards
- Marcus Martin
- Delon Paul
- Rennie Thomas

2. **COMMUNITY KEY INFORMANTS**

**Community: River Road**
Shadina Charles: Social Worker
Sherry Ann James: Teacher

Community: Gouyave

- Kenny Paul: Fisherman
- Oslyn Thomas: School Principal

Community: Woburn

- Brian Calliste: Advertising Manager
- Margaret Jones: Shopkeeper

Community: Tivoli

- Kester Lyons: Teacher
- Margaret Joseph: Teacher

3. NATIONAL INFORMANTS

- Dave Alexander – Drug Avoidance Officer, Drug Control Secretariat
- Cyril Dickson - Welfare and Counseling Officer, Her Majesty’s Prisons