

Ciclo de webinars

Informe GEM 2020 América Latina y el Caribe: inclusión y educación

Boys and Inclusion in Education in the Caribbean:
A Jamaican Case Study

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Jamaica



JAMAICA

Indicator		Percentage		Year	
Population		2.89 million		2018	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)		1.9		2018	
Poverty Rate		17.1		2016	
Unemployment		11.7		2018	
Youth Unemployment				2017	
		26.8		2017	
Literacy Rate		92.7(F)	83.4(M)	2014	

Jamaica: Education

Indicator	Percentages	Year
% of National Budget for Edn,	18.4	2017
Enrolment	73.2	2018
Early Childhood	94.9	
Primary	99.7	
Secondary	86.4	
Primary Completion Rate (F)	99.9	2018
(M)	99.6	
Dropout Rate	1.3	2018

Jamaica: Education

- Jamaica has achieved universal access to Early Childhood and Primary Education, high levels of literacy and expends a significant portion of its national budget on education. These are comparable to the standard of first world countries.
- The system of education, however could be described as elitist: The quality education one gets is largely determined by his/her socio-economic status. Poorer children invariably end up in schools offering lower quality education.
- In some schools at the primary and secondary levels as many as 50% of the students qualify for welfare assistance through PATH(Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education)– a cash transfer programme which entitles its recipients to free school meal and reduced fees

Case Study

Participants

- (i) Four Principals (primary, secondary, rural, urban, male, female)
 - (ii) Three Education Administrators
 - (iii) Three teachers
 - (iv) Three Dropouts
 - (v) Two Community members
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- Methodology: Individual unstructured interviews

Preliminary Findings

Curricula Challenges and Pedagogical Materials

- ❑ Despite a new national curriculum, challenges remain regarding the teaching and learning materials. Mostly print, requiring reading. This is seen as inconsistent with boys learning style. Many boys are either non-readers or struggling readers
- ❑ The teaching methods have remained largely teacher-centred, prompting the Jamaica Teaching Council to develop a handbook of strategies to improve the engagement and consequently the educational achievements of boys
- ❑ There is a call for teachers to utilise more hands-on strategies and integrate more technology in teaching

Preliminary Findings

Principals, Teachers, Support Staff

- School teams are not all on the same page regarding disengagement. Some teachers believe it is not their job to rehabilitate boys who are disruptive, violent and who otherwise are producers of anti-social and risky behaviours.
- Most of these teachers believe that anti-social behaviours should be heavily sanctioned. This is often translated to mean expulsion.
- Principals were far more compassionate towards boys who displayed disengaged behaviours. They tried even non-conventional methods to keep boys in schools.

Governance and Finance

- **Poverty** is a major driver among the variables impacting boys' education in Jamaica. In developing countries, while youth comprise half the population, they make up 60% of those who are poor (World Bank 2010). The majority of boys who are not performing are those from poor families. All the young men (dropouts) cited, inter alia, economic reasons for leaving school prematurely;
- Government has introduced a cash transfer programme—Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH). Under this programme students who qualify for assistance receive a subsidy for school expenses. **Boys receive a little more than girls so as to encourage them to stay in school.** Schools also do their part by extending their school feeding programmes to boys (and girls) who are not PATH beneficiaries but who have a genuine need.

Communities

- In some agricultural communities such as the Western cane belt, boys drop out of school during “crop time” (time for harvesting the cane) to work or to care for younger siblings while parents work on the plantations. It is a community norm. The value on education is not high.
- In the western end of the country, boys become disengaged for other reasons. While the national dropout rate is 8%, in that section of the island it is 14%. Boys drop out of schools to earn “quick money” through an activity known as “lotto scamming”. One school reports having as high as 50% of its boys not completing school due to this activity.

National Response

- Although there is awareness of the crisis with boys, not much has been done beyond thinking about it
- With the exception of one initiative all the response to boys' disengagement and underachievement have been at the school level
- Schools have implemented: Single-sex classes at certain grade levels in primary schools, Boys Day, mentorship programmes, professional development exercises, boys retreats; the idea of more boys residential schools has also been mooted.
- The Jamaica Teaching Council has initiated a programme of exposing boys to business leaders with a view to interest them in entrepreneurship. This quasi-government organization has also introduced a handbook of strategies to help teachers use more student-centred, inclusive strategies in teaching boys
- There is also the thinking at the central ministry to have more residential schools for boys.

THANK YOU

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SUMMA