



# EASTERN AND SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN YOUTH RESILIENCE, INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT (Y-RIE)

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR THE CARIBBEAN?

The Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) region struggles with high rates of interpersonal crime and violence, with violent crime rates among the highest in the world. Of the top 20 countries in the world with the highest murder rates, 17 are in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). While the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated the global homicide rate at 6.1 per 100,000 in 2017, homicide rates across the Caribbean are significantly higher. Most recent United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) data on Caribbean countries recorded Guyana's homicide rate at 19 per 100,000 (2015), Saint Lucia at 16 per 100,000 (2015) and Trinidad and Tobago at 31 per 100,000 (2015). These incidents of crime and violence disproportionately affect young people. In 2022, USAID began implementation of Y-RIE to address this critical issue and support youth to build more safe, prosperous, and resilient societies.

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR THE UNITED STATES?

The United States promotes a safe, prosperous, and resilient Caribbean region. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) links the increasing flow of drugs through the region and availability of firearms and drugs to the rise in violent crimes and high murder rates. Drug trafficking from South America has increasingly shifted to Caribbean trade routes to reach U.S. markets. Crime in the Caribbean negatively impacts the stability of the U.S. economy and creates dangers for U.S. citizens within the region.

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Over a five-year period, the activity will be implemented in Grenada, Guyana, Saint Lucia and at least one additional Caribbean country. It will strengthen both national and subnational government-provided social services by improving the capacity of, and access to, social service providers, increasing capabilities as well as use of evidence-based approaches within the public sector. Y-RIE will help strengthen coordination between social services and justice institutions, particularly around referral pathways, and promote partnerships (e.g., public and private) to support community crime and violence prevention efforts. Working with partners, Y-RIE will improve educational outcomes among at-risk youth, with a focus on improving the capacity of organizations to provide services; increase access to psychosocial support for youth at risk; and increase access to age- and stage-appropriate education for youth at risk. The activity will assist at-risk-youth to improve their preparedness to enter the workforce, increase professional development activities that match their needs with private sector demands, support entrepreneurial or small business pathways; and strengthen networks that facilitate these outcomes.

Y-RIE is committed to strengthening community and family systems—understanding that both can serve as protective factors and contribute to youth pathways to resilience. Y-RIE initiatives will include improving community responses to gender-based violence and interpersonal violence. The program is guided by a commitment to:

- **Sustainability:** focusing on sustainable outcomes in the way we design, partner, and implement, Y-RIE is committed to strengthening the capacities and capabilities of local (national and sub-national) governments, communities, civil society partners, and families to productively address youth crime and violence, during and after the program.
- **Mental health and psychosocial support:** Improving quality and access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is critical to support youth to develop improved self-management, regulation and processing skills to manage the impact of trauma and other difficult experiences.
- **Evidence-based learning model:** Y-RIE is committed to an evidence-based learning model of program design, implementation, evaluation, and iterative adaptation.

As part of the USAID/ESC portfolio of citizen security projects, Y-RIE will coordinate and collaborate with the USAID-funded Opportunities to Advance and Support Youth for Success (OASYS) project, implemented by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, and the

### Key Concepts for Y-RIE

Y-RIE is a youth-centered, systems-strengthening activity, based on a public health approach to violence prevention and incorporates positive youth development approaches, which targets youth at risk between ages 10–29.

**Public health approach**—Violence spreads endemically, and evidence-based treatment must be responsive to the risks and protective factors of victims and perpetrators to interrupt cycles of trauma, crime, and violence.

**Youth** are at the center of the activity's work in the design, partnerships, implementation, evaluation, and learning.

**Systems strengthening**—preventing youth crime and violence by working on the systems that impact a young person's pathway toward or away from crime and violence.

**Positive youth development (PYD)** — Starting with an asset-based approach, Y-RIE aims to build on youth potential and capacity, fostering an enabling environment for youth to develop their strengths and contribute to positive changes.

**Youth at risk — interventions will be** focused on youth who are at higher risk or already caught up in crime, violence, or delinquency, and/or have been in conflict with the law.

**Gender aware**—Y-RIE recognizes that male, female, and non-binary persons interact differently with crime and violence—as victims, bystanders, and perpetrators. For approaches to be effective, they must account for and address the different needs of each population.

Strengthening Evidence-Based Decision Making for Citizen Security (CariSECURE) 2.0 project implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

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