

CONCEPT NOTE

CARIBBEAN CONGRESS ON ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH HEALTH

Protecting our future by promoting the health and well-being of adolescents and youth in the Caribbean

October 15-17, 2019

Trinidad and Tobago

PURPOSE

A consortium of Caribbean and regional partners is organizing a regional Congress to mobilize greater investment and connect, collaborate and align efforts in the Caribbean for the promotion and protection of the health and well-being of all adolescents and young people. This Congress, **the first of its kind in the Caribbean**, will be a launchpad from which advocates, health and social workers, policy-makers, academia, clinicians and young people themselves can heed the call towards improving their health and well-being for the future development of the region.

According to 2015 estimates, there are 10.8 million young people (10-24 years) in the Caribbean, representing 25% of the total population, and 7.2 million adolescents (10-19 years), representing 17% of the total population. Within the Caribbean, we continue to recognize the disparities in the burden of poverty, underemployment and unemployment, secondary school enrolment and completion rates, financial and societal barriers young people face to access health information and quality health services that respond to their needs. Additionally, there are especially vulnerable youth who face additional levels of marginalization, such as adolescents with disabilities, HIV positive youth, migrant and socially-displaced adolescents, and those who identify along the LGBTQI spectrum.

The fostering of an environment in which Caribbean adolescents and youth not only survive, but thrive, requires concerted efforts from not only the health system, but also education, social protection, the private sector, civil society, communities, families, and young people themselves.

The robust and vibrant energy of Caribbean youth is yet to be fully harnessed in the Region, and **there is urgent need to sustainably improve investments in the health and well-being of adolescents and youth in the Caribbean to fully realise this potential**. When the appropriate investments are made in health, education, and social development, the benefits of the demographic dividend will be realized.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 300 participants is expected to participate in the Congress – **the majority of which will be young people from the region**. Participants will represent a cross-section of areas to reflect the multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral nature of adolescent and youth health and development. Among the participants we also expect public health leaders, social activists, youth development leaders and regional civil society representatives sharing best practices as well as challenges on youth health programs currently implemented in their countries. Special attention will be placed on **especially vulnerable youth** including those with disabilities, migrant youth, youth living with HIV and chronic conditions, LGBTQI youth, and youth in juvenile justice centres.



STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING

The congress will feature a range of sessions (plenary and break-out sessions), workshops (skills-building, demonstrative), events and activities (oral poster presentations, poster displays/walks, thematic side events, among others), focusing on a wide range of key areas and themes in health.

Congress Structure

Research, Science & Evidence	Training, Professional Development & Skills-Building	Innovative Approaches, Promising Practices & Emerging Areas of Interest	Strategic Advocacy & Partnership-building
<p>To provide a platform for the presentation of global, regional and national scientific research on adolescent and youth health to inform policy development and program design.</p>	<p>To provide participants with access to new tools and approaches in adolescent and youth health to address the main causes of death, disease burden and the promotion of optimal development of adolescents.</p>	<p>To showcase and discuss successful initiatives in low- and middle-income countries to assess options that can be adopted in the Caribbean.</p>	<p>To create a regional forum to present and discuss Caribbean-specific issues, challenges and opportunities to advance the adolescent and youth health agenda at the policy and program levels.</p>
<p>Major Themes: Mental Health, Substance Use, Violence and Injuries; Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; HIV/STIs; Environment and Climate Change; Nutrition and Physical Activity; and, Social Issues affecting Health.</p>			

EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

1. **Regional Commitment** through the development of a clear vision and core principles to address the health needs of adolescents and youth ages 10-24 years in the Caribbean.
2. **Empowered champions** in adolescent and youth health at the regional and country level with increased knowledge and awareness of current best practices, new tools and skills-sets applicable to our Caribbean context.
3. **Regional Action Plans** grounded in evidence on current and emerging priorities for adolescent and youth health and developed collaboratively with perspectives across an array of sectors.



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The consortium of partners responsible for planning this Congress is keen to ensure that young people are well represented at this very important event. Given the private sector's interest and engagement with youth across the Caribbean, **we are seeking financial support to cover the airfare, accommodation and per diem of young leaders from existing youth programs to participate in the Congress.** This regional exchange of ideas and strategies through the support of the private sector, would be a novel approach to exhibiting the types of investment already being made in the youth in the region. In addition to in-kind support, development partners and the UN are being approached to support with the Congress venue costs and related logistical expenses.

COLLABORATING ORGANISATIONS

Caribbean Association for Adolescent Health
 Caribbean Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
 Caribbean Forum for Liberation and Acceptance of Genders and Sexualities
 Caribbean Institute for Health Research
 Caribbean Public Health Agency
 Caribbean Regional Youth Council
 Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition
 CARICOM Youth Desk
 Commonwealth Youth Council
 Dance4Life Barbados
 Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago

Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC)
 International Association for Adolescent Health

 Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health and Sustainable Development's Youth Campaign
 NCD Child
 PAHO/WHO
 PANCAP
 The University of the West Indies
 UNFPA
 UNICEF
 UWI Guild