Inter-American Development Bank

Office of Evaluation and Oversight

DISCUSSION PAPER

No. IDB-DP-305

Life Histories of at-risk Youth in Jamaica

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June 2013

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Inter-American Development Bank

2013

http://www.iadb.org

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August 22 | 12

Consultancy to Conduct Life Histories for the Evaluation of the Citizen Security and Justice Program (CSJP) in Jamaica

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

The Inter-American Development Bank's (IADB) Office of Evaluation and Oversight Office (OVE) is now evaluating differing projects, which the IADB has been supporting in four countries of the region (Jamaica, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) so as to better understand what has worked more and less well during project implementation, as well as the reasons for variations in outcomes. Jamaica's Citizen Security and Justice Program (CSJP) is included in the comparative study.

In order to improve understanding of CSJP's youth targeted interventions, the OVE is commissioning a series of life histories of participants in the programme.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) outlines the following Objectives and Methodology:

OBJECTIVE: The objective of conducting life histories is to inform the complexity of the challenges faced by young people in high-risk and disadvantaged communities in Kingston and St Andrew and to better understand how the programme has intervened in their life trajectories.

ACTIVITIES The activities for this consultancy include: (i) in-depth interviews with 10 young people (5 females and 5 males below the age of 30) who live in CSJP participating communities; (ii) transcripts in English of the 10 life histories; and (iii) a one-page summary for each of the 10 life histories.

METHODOLOGY In consultation with the CSJP and the IADB, 10 young people will be selected from 5 of the 15 participating communities in Kingston. The following guidelines will help to define sample selection:

1. Communities will have varying characteristics, such as levels of violence; community structures and governance processes; political affiliation; and levels of poverty.

2. Two young persons (one male and one female) will be selected from each community. This will allow for reflection on the differential challenges males and females encounter within the same contexts;

3. All respondents will be between 22 and 30 years; and

4. In order to properly assess the types of challenges young people encounter as well as how persons with different aptitudes and attitudes negotiate these, the sample will include interviewees who have been more and less successful, with similar interventions from CSJP.

Each life history will be conducted in an area that is comfortable for the respondent. Interviews will focus on the following broad subject areas and specific topics noted below:

1. *Family dynamics*: Number of children in the household; household structure; parenting responsibilities and techniques; intra and inter household power dynamics; parents/guardians' occupations; financial and other (such as parenting) responsibilities placed on children and young people within the households; responsibilities placed on respondents; education and skill levels of household members; reasons for education choices and attainment; respondents' education and skills attainment prior to CSJP; family conflicts and methods of resolution; respondents' views on how growing up within their particular family contexts has helped to shape their life course, visions, values and mindsets.

2. *Community dynamics and Socialization*: Levels of poverty within community; major routes to earning; levels of crime and violence; authority structures and power relations; cultures and belief systems, particularly among young people; types of communal relations; peer influence and effects; relations between state agencies and agents with the community; respondents' views on how growing up within particular community and cultural contexts have helped to shape their life course, visions, values and mindsets; personal challenges encountered; tools and strategies for navigating the community prior to CSJP; tools and strategies for navigating the community since CSJP.

3. *Wider Social and Political Contexts and Development Prospects for Youth*: Realities of wider political and social contexts and consequences for communities and families; respondents' views on options, opportunities, possibilities and prospects given family and community contexts (prior to and since CSJP); respondents' views on options, opportunities, possibilities and prospects given political context (prior to and since CSJP); challenges to youth development since CSJP

4. *Role and Impact of the CSJP:* Summary views on the value of CSJP, including: (1) respondents' assessments of advantages and limitations of interventions; (2) respondents' views on the extent to which CSJP has influenced/can influence transformative change (which can catapult them beyond their current contexts); (3) respondents' views on more and less tangible outcomes of the interventions; (4) respondents' views on actions that may be required to fill any observed gaps; (5) respondents' views on personal/family/community changes that may be required to better facilitate CSJP's interventions, as well as the types of added support that would be required for such changes to occur.

The interviews will be open-ended. Accordingly, they will encourage reflection on challenges that are not addressed by the topics noted above. The topics noted

above will be used to guiding the discussions although interviewers will encourage respondents to recount their life stories in the manner they choose to tell them.

MODIFICATIONS TO THE METHODOLOGY

After consultations with CSJP, the following modifications were made to the Methodology:

1. The sample of respondents comprised 6 males and 4 females, which was considered a better reflection of the proportions of males and females within the programme.
2. Respondents were drawn from 10 different communities in order to obtain a wider perspective on community dynamics.
3. Two family life histories were included, in order to better understand the roles of families in shaping outcomes and the indirect effects of the programme of family dynamics.

All interviews were conducted in a private office at CSJP. Respondents supplied basic socio-demographic data prior to the start of the taped sessions. They were assured that their identities would be protected; all provided fictitious names, which were used both in the written texts and in the recordings.

REPORT OUTLINE

Consistent with the deliverables, this report contains transcripts of each taped session. The transcripts are preceded by a summary, which entails the basic socio-demographic data provided by each respondent, as well as the researcher's observations and conclusions. For each transcript, patois words have been translated to English; however, in order to retain the flavour of the interviews, the texts have not been translated to 'formal' English. Thus, readers should not expect grammatical precision.

In some cases, actual statements have been modified to ensure that the reader understands what the respondent and moderator hoped to convey. The moderators used language that respondents would most easily understand; this is reflected in the transcripts. Certain questions are repeated, sometimes to verify data. Repeating previous questions and statements is also typical of how Jamaicans converse. This, too, is reflected in the text. Readers are encouraged to bear these qualifications in mind as they try to interpret the material.

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SECTION 2: THE LIFE HISTORIES

The life stories presented below describe the challenges that young people within inner-city areas of Kingston and St Andrew are experiencing. Certain patterns, including in thought, are notable:

1. Living within closed environments, young people were more aware of and prone to reflect on the challenges within the boundaries of their homes and communities; there was comparatively less contemplation on how the wider political and socio-economic contexts influenced the challenges they face.
2. Violence presents major constraints, with some persons being able to subsist within it than others. Violence disrupts families and communities. It can also forge bonds as people depend on each other to survive. Violence stymies educational advancement but it can also used as an excuse for activities (such as attending school) that are considered less essential.
3. Correspondingly, the emphasis that is placed on education appears to be transmitted across generations. It is significant that many respondents were unaware of their parents' educational achievements. Further, only in one case (Latanya) was it reported that the respondent, at the outset, motivated herself to succeed in the total absence of parental support. There were other respondents who motivated themselves only after they recognized how their educational status limited their prospects.
4. The value systems within and across inner-city areas differ and peer influence can have major weight. For example, in some areas, young men are encouraged to act responsibly towards their offspring while, in others, young men had poor examples to follow. In some areas, sitting on the corner and avoiding school was the expected behaviour. In others, young men and women who attend school were encouraged to do so. Breaking away from limiting mindsets is difficult and requires---as CSJP appears to be providing---personal and continuous encouragement. Scaling up this component and approach appears to be important.
5. The interviews underscored how disabling conditions (in addition to educational disadvantage) are transmitted across generations. Chronic poverty, violence, aggression, varying forms of abuse and other learnt behaviours (positive and negative) are transmitted intergenerationally. CSJP is attempting to disrupt such harmful transmissions. Respondents suggested out that harmful intergenerational transmissions are more effectively disrupted through family interventions (see point below).
6. Drug use and abuse is a common problem, which the respondents understate. Marijuana is largely seen as beneficial, enabling persons to forget their conditions and instilling calm where there could be violence.

7. The family stories suggest that comprehensive support, which prioritizes parenting, training, and employment opportunities for parents could prove beneficial. Moreover, the provision of scholarships is critical for catapulting families beyond their existing circumstances.
8. The stories also highlighted the merits of wider community interventions, which could be done in close collaboration with other agencies. Many respondents expressed the fear that without multipronged interventions that target the contexts, the sustainability of interventions can be threatened, as participants return to the challenges within their boundaries.
9. The majority of respondents appeared to require deep and effective psychological interventions. It is worthwhile to examine the reach of the life skills component, given the trauma that some young people are trying to surmount. The accounts show that even the seemingly progressive (such as Latanya) sometimes lack the psychological fortitude to navigate their contexts and to move beyond the scars of their past.
10. Many respondents expressed the need for long-term intervention/sustained support. Here, the emphasis was not only on financial support but, perhaps moreso, on building psychosocial skills.
11. Involvement with CSJP has produced both direct and indirect benefits. Respondents described how their involvement with youth across borders, as is required in some of CSJP's programmes, has helped with promoting peaceful social relations. Some described how CSJP had helped to develop their leadership skills and enabled them to become effective peer mentors, though this was not their initial aim.
12. Respondents underscored the benefits of personal connection with staff at CSJP. It was common to hear interviewees describe staff as family members, whom they could not afford to disappoint

LIFE STORY 1

Pseudonym: Swain.

Community: Parade Gardens

Age: 25 years;

Date of Birth: June 12, 1987

Sex: Male

Number of siblings: 4 brothers (1 of whom died when young) and 5 sisters. Swain's parents were not married. His mother and father have two children (boys) together. Swain's father has two other sons and one daughter. His mother has 4 daughters and two sons from other relationships. Her other son, conceived with Swain's father, died (noted above).
Household: Swain lives with his 'stepmother' and father, who are not married. The family lives in a 'big yard', in which he, his father, stepmother, brother and sister live in one house. The remaining brothers and sisters live with his mother.
Education: Swain has no knowledge of either of his parents' educational background although he notes that they are both literate. He (Swain) was expelled from school as early as 10th grade.

Swain's story is fairly common among young males in Jamaica's inner-city communities. Abandoned by his mother at an early age, he was drawn into gang warfare because of his uncle's prior association. He recounts being kidnapped and treated very harshly by gang members, who had been in dispute with his uncle. He states that having escaped, he has vowed never to be disrespected by anyone at any other period in his life. Swain states that he has had some counseling, though with little effect: counseling has not resulted in behaviour change. Thus, the scars caused by his mother's abandonment and, particularly, the kidnapping remain.

Swain is caught between the route that CSJP is recommending and his obligations, as he perceives them, to the youth under his charge. Here, he speaks proudly of how highly he his regarded, as he is now the 'don' for two lanes in Parade Gardens. Interestingly, Swain uses an American accent---seemingly to make a distinct impression---when he describes himself as "evil", as well as capable of and committed to causing hurt to whoever disrespects him or his gang members. He switches, just as easily, to a jovial and soft disposition, in which he appears vulnerable and requiring the protection he states that he provides for others. While he would embrace another life, he is not prepared to renege his responsibilities to the gang. The only recourse, as he sees it, is to remove/be removed entirely from the community; only this would supply a genuine second start.

The story reinforces the importance of urgent and effective psychological interventions to deal with the trauma and resulting problems of identity among youth.

Without this, psychological frailty can be transferred to the apparent---though not necessarily real---bravado of gang membership and leadership. It is also important to acknowledge the real constraints posed by the immediate community contexts and the limits that these place on personal transformation, though seemingly for some youth more than others.

Moderator: We've got some of the background information already; I just want to talk about your life and to understand the role that CSJP has played in it.

Moderator: You were telling me that you live with your stepmother and father now.

Moderator: Did you live with your mother at any time?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: How was that?

Swain: I lived with my mother for approximately one year and couple months; I then moved back with my father.

Moderator: Do you think that your not living with your mother has affected you? Are you better or worse off because you did not live with your mother?

Swain: When I lived with my mother it was somewhat fine; I had no problem with it.

Moderator: How did you feel when you had to go back to your father?

Swain: I had no problem with it.

Moderator: Doesn't it matter which parent you live with?

Swain: No

Moderator: What was it like growing up in the house? Did your mother and father get along or did they fight a lot?

Swain: No, my mother left me when I was three so I don't really know.

Moderator: Now you are living with your stepmother. How do your stepmother and father get along?

Swain: They get along fine.

Moderator: You were telling me that your father had eight children and one died. Was it your brother who died?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Your sister; how have they done? Have they done well?

Swain: Yes. Only two of them have children.

Moderator: How old are they (your sisters)?

Swain: One sister is 27 years; she has 4 children. The other is either 16 or 17.

Moderator: Do you have children too?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Do you have one child?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: You were telling me that you got kicked out of school in tenth grade; how did that happen?

Swain: I had a dispute with a student. I used a knife to cut him on his hand and I had to jump the fence. I had to leave school. They told me not to come back to school.

Moderator: Were you involved in a gang?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: From what age were you involved?

Swain: From I was 12 years old.

Moderator: How did you get involved in a gang?

Swain: I got involved in a gang because I got kidnapped when I was ten years?

Moderator: You got kidnapped? Why?

Swain: My uncle was involved in violent warfare with some guys so they saw me and they kidnapped me from I was ten years old

Moderator: Were you with them for all that time?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Between 10 and what 12?

Swain: Yes, so from then I just got involved in a gang.

Moderator: Are you saying that your uncle's enemies kidnapped you?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: How did they treat you?

Swain: They cut me in my face and chest and they tied me up. They wanted to urinate on me but I begged them not to. They threw garbage on me and said they were going to set me afire; they tied my mouth. I was crying but while I cried I asked Father God to help me. Father sent God His angels to release the rope and help me so I got loose, run off through the open land until I reached the main road and escaped.

Moderator: So were you still in Kingston or did they keep you somewhere else?

Swain: Still in Kingston

Moderator: Did you go back home after your experience?

Swain: Yeah

Swain: So you then joined a gang for what, friendship for defense?

Swain: It's for defense…because I am taking no disrespect. When I was little, my father did not allow anyone to disrespect us, so I don't know how I got disrespected. They kidnapped me because I was beside my mother.

Moderator: So the gang protected you?

Swain: Yes, it protected me for a while

Moderator: After you got kicked out of tenth grade, what happened afterwards?

Swain: I got myself in badness. I followed a bad gang and did things; I fired shots at people

Moderator: Did you kill anybody?

Swain: Kill anybody? (chuckled)

Moderator: You do not have to answer that.

Swain: No, really I did not kill anybody

Moderator: So are you out of the gang now?

Swain: No I am not; I can't come out of the gang. The only way I could do so is if I left the community for good. The only way I can leave is if I went somewhere else to live or if I went overseas. If I am still in the community, I will be in the gang.

Moderator: So why can't you leave the gang? Is it that you can't or that you do not want to leave?

Swain: No, I do not want to come out of it.

Moderator: Why?

Swain: I have lived in the community for 25 years and in a bad gang. I have fired shots on people; I have fallen out with people.... My brother was coming from training one day. He saw me on the corner and said "Why are you here?" Why aren't you looking out? Shots started firing and my cousin got shot; I did not know that my brother got shot also. My friend told me that my brother was also shot. When I looked, I saw my brother on the ground.

Moderator: So do you have another brother who died?

Swain: No, my brother got shot in the neck.

Moderator: Didn't he die?

Swain: No, he was on the ground. From then, I told myself that I do not have any heart for anybody for they do not have any heart for me. People started to blame me, saying that it was because of me. Right now, he is in a wheel chair; I just hope Father God makes him walk again. So I really can't come out of this gang, because I have to be in it. If I was made to

be a soldier, I would be; if I was made to be a police or a doctor I would be, but I was made to be a gangster because I tried to let it go but can't. I have to be a gangster. I was born to be a gangster, so it is how I am going to die.

Moderator: Therefore, have you decided that this is going to be your life?

Swain: Yes, I just hope that my life changes within the next two years time or more because I don't really like this life that I am living. I would like to move from the community but cannot move.

Moderator: So let me backtrack now, you went to primary school up to Grade Ten?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Then you get kicked out of school, so what you did do? Did just hang out with the gang afterwards? Did you have any subjects or anything at the time?

Swain: No

Moderator: After you got kicked out, did you just hang out with the gang? Didn't you have a job? How did you survive?

Swain: I hustled

Moderator: In what ways did you hustle?

Swain: I walked and begged people.

Moderator: You walked and begged?

Swain: Yes. That's how the CSJP people came to know me through my cousin Denise

Moderator: Denise is your cousin, this Denise here (at CSJP)?

Swain: No, the same Denise you know. She had the CSJP form and went around with it. Mr. Simmons and Mr. Robinson knew my situation and background so they tried to help because they did not want me to go back into the gang because gang life is not normal. I told them a lot of lies; I told them that I was not in any gang again but what goes around comes around or what's hidden in the dark comes to light. I was hiding my thing in the dark but you know the cat is always coming in the dark to

see the rat, so that was how my thing came to light: they found out I was still in the gang.

Moderator: So they found out you were still in the gang?

Swain: Yes, but they were still trying with me for they know I have a mentality to change my life because I was changing but because of some problems with some men, I cannot change. This is because I was disrespected when I was little and will not allow anyone to disrespect me. I am an 'ignorant' (meaning contentious) young man.

Moderator: How long were you on the streets before Denise contacted you?

Swain: I was there from 13 and when I was 16 or 17, I found out about CSJP

Moderator: Did you get involved in the skills training?

Swain: No the six-week thing/job experience at Chesterfield

Moderator: So you went there for six weeks

Swain: Yes but I didn't spend six weeks; I spent four

Moderator: Why?

Swain: Because I misbehaved

Moderator: What did you do?

Swain: I had a dispute with the soldiers. I misbehaved and so they said I had to move from Chesterfield

Moderator: You are really sleepy. Do you smoke?

Swain: No

Moderator: You can tell me the truth. Your name is not on the tape and I cannot understand unless you say the truth. Remember you want a different life; things cannot change if you do not tell the truth.

Swain: Yes, I would love to change because I have a child that I am living for. My daughter was just born and I have to do a lot of spending for her.

Moderator: Yes, you have to live for her so tell the truth. How long have you been smoking?

Swain: For a long time; I have been smoking from 12 years old.

Moderator: Do you smoke marijuana?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Grabba is different, isn't it?

Swain: Yes, grabba is marijuana mixed up

Moderator: Do you smoke that too?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Do you do it everyday?

Swain: No

Moderator: But you did it last night?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: So you had 'grabba' last night

Swain: Yes

Moderator: What time did you go to bed?

Swain: About after 12

Moderator: And what time did you wake up?

Swain: Before 8

Moderator: Did you smoke this morning?

Swain: I didn't burn marijuana this morning....

Moderator: You talk so quietly

Swain: I am somewhat shy.

Moderator: Why are you shy? You are not shy with me, are you?

Swain: No but when I am talking, it's as though I am afraid to speak. I cry easily.

Moderator: Don't worry. I have done this for a long time. I have talked to a lot of young people so there is nothing you can tell me that will surprise me. You don't take cocaine, do you?

Swain: No, I don't

Moderator: Do you drink?

Swain: Yes, I drink liquor, such as BOOM. I also drink Appleton because I have to keep the mind flowing.

Moderator: You have to keep your mind flowing?

Swain: Yes, I am a man who is ignorant in every way. If you mess with me; I will mess with you. You should not believe that I will laugh with you. I will hurt you and I will do so until I see something wicked happen to you. I do not laugh with people. That is why people do not play around me. They say I am born in June; I am Gemini and evil. If you get me mad; you get me mad. If you get me pissed off; you get me pissed off. I will rip you up (American accent). So don't get me crazy; just have me on the right track.

Moderator: Explain to me why you get so angry? Is it because of the kidnapping? Why are you angry?

Swain: You see the kidnapping: it gives me a thing in the skin that just seems to prick me. I have no heart for anyone. It's as if I am already dead. The devil tells me I am already dead; "you're just a walking dead". So, that has me. Additionally, I saw my brother get shot so that increased the impression that I am already dead and should do what I should do; just get crazy. However, sometimes when Mr. Simmons (CSJP) calls me, he calms my head down.

Moderator: You told me that you went on the retreat and had an altercation with the soldiers. Why did that happen? What did they do to you?

Swain: They hit me in my stomach and caused me to vomit blood.

Moderator: Why did they do that?

Swain: I don't know why they did that. They then put someone out in the cold. They have no heart. They say we have no respect because we are from the ghetto. We told them they can't hit us because they are not our mothers and fathers. They told us we have no manners but we told them that is not the reason; it's just because of how we grew up.

Moderator: Do you think you grew up in a loving home or did you decide to show love in spite of? Did you feel loved?

Swain: Yes, my father taught me love and my mother gave me anything I wanted

Moderator: So, do you think that it is the kidnapping that changed you?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: After you left the camp, did Mr. Simmons and CSJP come to find you?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: What did you get involved in?

Moderator: They sent me on a job experience programme in steel craft. Keisha was the Manager for Steelcraft; she is one of the action officers for CSJP. She sent me to do job experience but I left it.

Moderator: Why?

Swain: I left it because of friction but Ms. Adams gave me a chance. She told me I was on a chalk line. She sent me to HEART to do Level 1 certificate in plumbing. Then I moved to Level II. However, I didn't complete Level II; I have 2 units outstanding. Mr. Simmons and Mr.Robinson are still proud of me. They told me I got the last chance and was on chalk line. They did not expect that I would settle down and finish my course. Ms Adams was also proud of me. Ms Delapena took me somewhere to get help. If I did not do that HEART programme, I would not be able to get into the National Water Commission (NWC).

Moderator: Are you still with CSJP?

Swain: Yes, I am on standby. I am waiting on Ms Adams to call me to finish plumbing. They are not taking on new persons for plumbing at this time.

Moderator: So you work at NWC in the meantime?

Swain: Yes but its better that I stick to NWC because NWC accepts you with Level I in plumbing. They also take you on with Level II. They place you in their system with Level 1. I am in their system because I have my identification number. I don't have to worry.

Moderator: Okay. You are successful and moving now, aren't you? Do you think you are moving?

Swain: Yes, I feel on top of the world because I am my own man but I would love to move from the community.

Moderator: Do you think this is the only route to change?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Let me ask this question: You are still angry about the kidnapping. Did you get counseling under CSJP?

Swain: Yes, I got counseling but you know counseling cannot make me change the real way

Moderator: What will make you change in the real way?

Swain: You counsel me today and tomorrow I go back to the same thing. If you counsel me tomorrow, I still go back to the same thing. This is because I live in the same community. This tells me that I have to move from the community to change my life.

Moderator: If you move from the community and go to another innercity community, you might be in the same situation. Do you think you would make it?

Swain: Yes, if it is not a community where there is violence, I would change my life. When you socialize with people who do not expect war and do not deal with gangs; if you are expected to work and settle down, you will change.

Moderator: Do you think politics has anything with how things turned out for you?

Swain: Politics come and go. Politicians come and brainwash us and we civilians do not think about things the way we should. Portia and Andrew Holness

hug and kiss; they do not fight. Yet, we do not think we should not fight; we disagree because we are from different parties. We behave like idiots. We should unite and chase politicians because they brainwash us so that they can reap the benefits for their children. If the politicians give us $100000 to share, by tomorrow there is nothing. We should chase them and tell them we need work. We shouldn't allow them to come in and give us guns to kill each other.

Moderator: In Southside area, do all people vote in the same way?

Swain: No, people vote for both parties

Moderator: And do they fight each other?

Swain: Yes they do

Moderator: When you were growing up, would you say your household was poor or not poor?

Swain: In my situation, I never saw my father beg anyone. He always had money. I used to eat chicken and oxtail. I never went to bed hungry.

Moderator: Was he in a gang?

Swain: No, my father always had his own. He was always working. He was not involved in badness

Moderator: But your uncle was in a gang?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: So that is why they drafted you in…because of your uncle?

Swain: Yes, yes

Moderator: What does your father feel about you being in a gang? Has he discussed this with you?

Swain: You know, my father told me not to be in a gang. He said I am not to get involved. When he heard I am my own don and men are taking talk from me he asked me what I am getting involved in

Moderator: Are you a don for Southside?

Swain: I am not really the don for the community but am the don for the two lanes that I am responsible for

Moderator: So, you are responsible for two lanes?

Swain: Yes, the youth have an understanding and take talk from me. If someone disrespects the youth, they come to me and I get involved and try to hurt someone. I tell them you cannot disrespect the youth because if you disrespect them you disrespect me.

Moderator: What sort of rules do you have, as the don?

Swain: It's just the way we grew up: we don't allow people to disrespect us. I haven't lived any life as yet. However, I have a daughter. I have a lot of life left.

Moderator: Do you think you will live long?

Swain: I feel I will live long because I do not allow anyone to push me the wrong way because I am a don. Even though I am a don, I won't allow people to push me so that police or a bad man kills me. I am always guarded by the angels; by Father God; and everything.

Moderator: So you are well guarded?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Aren't you scared?

Swain: No, you can't be scared. If you are around me, you get power. No one can harm you

Moderator: So, what about the guys around you? Do they guard you as well?

Swain: Yes and I guard them. When they get disrespected, I have to step in. One of them just called me and asked where I was. I told him I would soon be there. I am responsible for the youth. I would love to get some help to help them because I want to leave the community.

Moderator: You said CSJP helped you and that is why you are at NWC, do you think they can do anything more?

Swain: Yes, I would like them to help me to leave the community so that I can live elsewhere because I cannot keep being involved in some things. I don't want to die and leave my child

Moderator: And if you leave, what will be the future for you?

Swain: I plan to work

Moderator: Still with NWC? Have you got in trouble there?

Swain: No

Moderator: Tell me about your daughter, is she going to school? No, she was just born!

Swain: Yes, yesterday she was one week old

Moderator: That can help change you, can't it?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Is she your first child?

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Are you married?

Swain: No, I don't believe in marriage.

Moderator: Why?

Swain: Those things go nowhere. Are you married? See the marriage thing goes nowhere

Moderator: What do you feel about life, the government and what has been done for young people?

Swain: Nothing has been done for me and anybody else. Politicians promise to do things but do nothing. Instead, they give us guns to kill each other.

Moderator: How long were you with CSJP?

Swain: From 2004

Moderator: That is 8 years

Moderator: How long do you think you will need to be with CSJP? How much more time will you need?

Swain: A lot more time.

Moderator: You told me that you need them to help you to move, what else do you need?

Swain: I would love them to move me; only that

Moderator: And then you will continue with CSJP training?

Swain: Yes.

Moderator: So do you feel you will need to change your entire context

Swain: Yes

Moderator: Do you feel you have a lot of opportunities?

Swain: Yes, there are a lot of opportunities. It's just the community (that causes the challenge).

The End

LIFE STORY 2

Pseudonym: LaTanya

Community: Allman Town

Age: 20 years

Date of Birth: September 17, 1992

Sex: Female

Siblings: One brother and 2 sisters (All three have different fathers)

Household: LaTanya's father is dead. She lives with her mother and sisters. Her brother is away. The family lives in a 'yard', comprising two houses. LaTanya's grandmother, older sister and children occupy one house. She lives with her mother, uncle, her uncle's family (his 'baby mother' and son) and younger sister in the other house. There are four bedrooms.

Education: LaTanya's mother attended secondary school; however, she (LaTanya) is not sure of her mother's achievements. Currently, LaTanya attends the University of Technology, where she is entering her third year.

LaTanya's story depicts the sort of resilience that development practitioners encourage and celebrate. In many respects, LaTanya exists without parental support as, from her account, her mother---who is the only living parent---has contributed only modestly to her upkeep. Indeed, her mother's treatment of her, as she reports it, can be classified as emotionally and mentally abusive. Latanya has been given the role of "parent" for her younger sibling as well as, in some respects, for her mother.

Despite this, she has found the courage to attend and excel in school, motivating herself and exercising what she describes as "faith" (Latanya maintains spiritual principles, which help to sustain her.) However, her withdrawal and admitted use of excessive work to avoid circumstances are potentially destructive. Her story reinforces the importance of psychological interventions as well as the emphasis on parenting, specifically and wider family dynamics, more broadly. Being forced to exist within the same conditions is, despite her accomplishments, proving counterproductive in some areas.

Latanya faces other risks. Now a parent, her future depends on how well she is able to provide for her child, for whom she receives little support. Here, she would benefit from reliable and adequate social protection.

Moderator: You say that you live with your mother? Do you have a stepfather?

Latanya: I don't know.

Moderator: Let us define your stepfather as someone who lives with your mother

Latanya: No she goes out

Moderator: She goes out? What does that mean?

Latanya: They don't live together; she visits him.

Moderator: How was it growing up in your household? Have you been living with her alone plus your uncle all this time?

Latanya: No, I grew up in Fletcher's land and then I went to live with her 2007

Moderator: You were living in Fletcher's land with whom?

Latanya: My father's family

Moderator: How was that?

Latanya: It was not all that good; I survived.

Moderator: What did you survive? How was it? Was it unpleasant?

Latanya: Sometimes it was okay because of the family setting but sometimes I just felt as if I were an outcast because everybody had their parents while I only had my grandmother.

Moderator: Did they treat you right or did they treat you like an outcast or it was largely you who felt like an outcast?

Latanya: Sometimes because... as you know, in family yards people are always quarrelling. Therefore, sometimes I felt like an outcast.

Moderator: Did they quarrel with you?

Latanya: Yes, sometimes

Moderator: And when they quarrel with you, do they mention the other parent or anything like that?

Latanya: Yeah, this is how I see my life from I was growing up: On my father's side of my family, I am always in the middle of everything so I am always hearing about what this side of the family is doing and what it is not doing. On mother's side of the family, it's the same thing: I am always in the middle of everything.

Moderator: So you are basically divided: you are in the middle of a division?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: You say that they complain to you but do they treat you badly, such as with your father's side of the family saying that you belong to your mother and your mother's side making you feel that you belong to your father?

Latanya: No but its the words that they use sometimes.... Sometimes I hear my uncle or anyone on my father's side saying that your mother didn't do this and your mother made your father leave. Sometimes the words hurt. The same thing happens on my mother's side of the family. I felt like an outsider growing up.

Moderator: Did you feel that way on both sides or just on your father's?

Latanya: Yes both sides. In high school I got pregnant and went to live with my mother; the same thing happened. They said: "When you are over your father's side of family they don't look at you; they only pretend".

Moderator: Now that you are in the household in a family yard how do you feel? Do you feel comfortable?

Latanya: No but I know that better days are ahead, I just have to be humble go through it.

Moderator: How do you find Fletcher's land? What was the community like?

Latanya: Fetcher's land was okay because on holidays and weekends they have different inner city community programmes that I would get myself involved in. They always have community spirit. They involve the youth in different activities that will keep them out of trouble.

Moderator: What about Allman Town?

Latanya: I am not involved in community activities in Allman Town, except for the community fair, where I do peer tutoring. However, I am a part of the Kingston Gardens Youth Club.

Moderator: When did you get involved with CSJP?

Latanya: From high school, I was a part of Y.O.U and then CSJP was a sponsor to Y.O.U Swim Jamaica Programme and that's where I got involved.

Moderator: So do you swim?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: Why were you a part of YOU? It is a Youth mentoring project, right? Were you a mentee?

Latanya: Yes, I am a mentee

Moderator: And why did you feel you needed that or was it that somebody felt you needed that?

Latanya: No, they have summer camp every summer, and we go to summer camp and they have different programmes. They have a shadow week programme, which is like a job experience programme but I was too young for that. They also have a mentorship programme, which I wanted to join. Then, they chose a mentor for me.

Moderator: So what was that like? Was it helpful having a mentor?

Latanya: Yes because my mentor and I have a connection.

Moderator: Have you had the same mentor over the years?

Latanya: From Grade 9

Moderator: But CSJP itself does not have a mentorship programme. Do you think it would have helped if they did?

Latanya: Yeah that was one of my objectives… to give back

Moderator: So you were going to school; you moved back to Federal Gardens, then you moved to Allman Town. Where did you go to school in Allman Town?

Latanya: I was finishing up high school

Moderator: You kept going to the same school when you lived in Allman Town?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: So how did you do with your subjects?

Latanya: They were okay.

Moderator: Meaning

Latanya: They were okay; they were okay.

Moderator: How many did you get?

Latanya: Currently, I have 16 subjects

Moderator: 16! 1 -- 6?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: Really, why did you do so many? Do you love studying?

Latanya: No that's what I did. Persons say I am anti-social but I am not anti-social; I talk to everybody; I am a people person. It's just that I don't go out or anything; I love reading and writing.

Moderator: What was the financial situation within your household? Did you have enough money?

Latanya: That was always struggle. Since I was growing up, that was always a struggle but I stayed humble and satisfied. During high school, when I did GSAT, I got a scholarship from Police Officer's Club; I got a scholarship there, and then throughout high school I got other scholarships from Ministry of National Security and then CSJP. That has helped me a lot because without that it would be really bad. Most persons don't know it but I found it difficult going to school whether it was because of transportation or lunch money. However, I still made the effort and went.

Moderator: You are very independent. Does your mother encourage you to be like that?

Latanya: Sometimes I wonder… because she does not know … When I talk to my friends, I tell them that I go to school by faith, and that's what I do every year. Right now, I have applied for scholarships. I did not get through with the NCB scholarship; they've e-mailed me. Somebody asked me: "How do you manage?" I tell them I go to school by faith; that's the only way. Then CSJP would help. My mother does not know how I go to school; all she knows is that I go to school. Sometimes I wonder because she doesn't know… because growing up everybody has me as this bright child, she just assumes that everything is fine.

Moderator: So she doesn't support you very much?

Latanya: No, she used to, such as when I did Cape. I always got awards and she was proud but after all the glory, everything goes back to normal.

Moderator: So you pushed yourself then?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: So remind me, when did CSJP come in? Is it after high school?

Latanya: No, during high school

Moderator: During high school

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: What support did they give?

Latanya Well… the school fee

Moderator: So how did you hear about CSJP?

Latanya: From Y.O.U

Moderator: Just Y.O.U staff. Did you contact CSJP or did they contact you?

Latanya: No, they have different community representatives from CSJP and because of different club activities I learnt about CSJP

Moderator: And then you approached them or did the club approach them on your behalf?

LaTanya: The club and then you get to know them

Moderator: They provided school fee. What else did they do?

Latanya: They have the summer programme and job experience. They have a whole lot of programmes but I am a part of the scholarship programme and the summer employment programme.

Moderator: So those are the three that you are in involved in

LaTanya: Yes

Moderator: They do life skills and all that; are you a part of that as well?

Latanya: No, because of school. However, it really helps a lot because despite the challenges I have, I don't limit myself. When you see that you can go out and get help and persons are interested in helping you, then that gives you more support to push.

Moderator: You said you have a baby. In what year did you have her?

LaTanya: In high school

Moderator: How old were you then?

Latanya: 16

Moderator: So who takes care of the baby? Is it your mom? Why do you shake your head? Who does?

Latanya: Me

Moderator: Do you have to finance the baby as well? Do you do it all by yourself?

LaTanya: Yes

Moderator: So where is she now? Is she in childcare?

Latanya: No. During school time I drop her off. She goes to school so I drop her off and my mother picks her up. But now that I am working she is at my Grandmother's.

Moderator: So how is that? Is that hard for you?

Latanya: Sometimes… but it just makes me more determined to push for what I want.

Moderator: And you said that you are in 3rd year now at Utech?

Latanya: No, I am going into third year

Moderator: Oh and what do you want to do?

Latanya: An auditor and a part-time lecturer.

Moderator: After UTech, what will you do next?

Latanya: Get a job and save to go and do my Masters

Moderator: Are you going to stay in Jamaica?

Latanya: Yes, I want to give back because doing the community service I not only do it for the hours but I do it beyond the hours even in the summer. I do it because I like helping other persons, especially in the inner city. I like pushing other persons to show them that not because you come from the inner city must it mean you can't come out to something great.

Moderator: How many people you think have your mind set compared to a non-progressive mindset?

Latanya: I am not sure but I tried to encourage them when I started working this summer. We had a mini orientation at the JDF and they were asking for someone to stand and give a synopsis of what CSJP does. I got up and I was telling them about the different programmes and how it (CSJP) helps. It produces more leadership qualities in me because I am not only a leader at school but I am involved in church activities as well and I see myself as a leader anywhere I go. One of the summer workers said: "You know, when you stand up, you're just different, I can't believe you come from the ghetto". I explained that that is just a state of mind and if you allow yourself to be that low then you are going to conceive that and you are going to act upon it. I don't let anything stop me. If I fall or make a mistake that just pushes me to go and get it right

Moderator: How did you keep yourself? You said that you talk to everybody. Do you have many friends?

Latanya: Many friends? Well I know a lot of persons

Moderator: No, what I mean is that a lot of persons are influenced by their friends, so I am just wondering how you kept yourself along a certain path? The

picture you are portraying is that you are not really supported within your house; you basically support yourself

Latanya: Well its self-determination.

Moderator: What about the friends you have? How influential are they?

Latanya: Well, they influence me a lot because they see me as a role model so, because of that, now you have a standard to live up to.

Moderator: How did you get pregnant in school? How did that happen?

Latanya: Well, I wouldn't say it was peer pressure. I would say it's that emotional need that I didn't get at home; probably that's it.

Moderator: How is your connection with your child's father?

Latanya: We are just friends

Moderator: How you do feel about that?

Latanya: Well I tell my friends that if there was anything I could change

Moderator: It would be that?

Latanya: Not really because that helps to push me even more and it made me learn a lot; it also helped me to be able to help others. Most teenagers think that when they get pregnant it's the end of the world and all of that. No its not! That is, unless you want it to be. So that kind of pushed me more to think about others.

Moderator: What's the thing that you would change then?

Latanya: One thing that I would change is that because I never had anyone to talk to or the mother that I wanted

Moderator: So would you change your mother?

Latanya: No I can't change her but I would want a mother figure, someone who I could relate to about certain things, maybe that would have prevented that (the pregnancy) from happening.

Moderator: Tell me a little about CSJP generally. Where you do think CSJP has been helpful; where have they not been so helpful and where they could be more helpful? If they were to modify the programme what would you suggest?

Latanya: They have basically been helpful in every area because they try to help everyone. Though sometimes the funding is hard, they try to help

everyone. They have the summer programme and they normally do it for 6 weeks but to facilitate everyone so they can get a chance to experience what it is like to work, they cut it down so each person can get a chance to work for 3 weeks. That way, more persons come on the programme. It is very helpful because you have people leaving high school or 6TH form now and the work experience is good for them. They learn how to conduct themselves within the workplace, learn something about the field that they are going in and stuff like that. It helps in that area as well, since some people cannot afford school fees and may be better off getting a job. I am very grateful to CSJP for the scholarship because I get to go to school full-time. Regarding the life skills training, it helps the adults too, not only the young youths but the adults as well and gives them a chance to go back to school and gives them a skill to get a job. Some of the programmes provide stipends.

Moderator: Let me ask you something about the skills that you are being taught because many of the programmes go through HEART

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: Do you think that those skills really help people to transform their situations or do you think that there could be a broader range of skills? You know you are going to UTech but for those going to HEART…

Latanya: Well they have different programmes like child-care, and you have mechanics, so basically it's a start. You just need your determination and your level of motivation to push yourself to the next level

Moderator: In terms of transforming situations, is there anything more that could be done in terms of skills provision? I am going to ask you about the different components but I just want to get your view on whether there could be more beyond the childcare and mechanics etc?

Latanya: Yes there could be more because some teens can do hair, they can learn to go on promotions to learn to speak. You could have more in those areas in order to give them a wider scope of what to learn

Moderator: How did you get involved in Business Administration?

Latanya: Well from Grade 10 in high school, I found myself liking it and then I started loving it. From primary school, it has always been in me to teach. Persons say I should become a teacher. But business has always been my Plan B because I always wanted to be a lawyer but looking at the cost and everything it was Plan B because I never really did subjects in CXC that would have facilitated me becoming a lawyer. I never did Literature

so I said I am going to work with Plan B. In the future somewhere I still can become a lawyer but `plan b seems more feasible now

Moderator: But is it because you don't have the funds for Plan A?

Latanya: No

Moderator: Do you like it?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: To the extent that you can easily give up your plan A or are you still going to go towards it?

Latanya: Maybe somewhere down the line

Moderator: And how will plan A fit in with the fact that you have a child? How would it all fit in?

Latanya: That's why I said in the future. Not near future because I have to achieve my goal of being an auditor and I plan to go to the highest level, like one of the all island auditors

Moderator: Don't you get any support for your child at all? Do you have full responsibility for her?

Latanya: I work every summer and I save that money. The first pay goes towards my registration for Utech so that my space is secured. Next pay goes to her school fee and from there, when school starts, I would help out. Some people would either call me to 'do hair' (hairdressing) or help them with school work.

Moderator: And so you get some supplementary income that way? Alright in terms of going where you want to go now, what sort of challenges do you have and what do you think can come up?

Latanya: Challenges now?

Moderator: What proportion of your fees does CSJP pay?

Latanya: It depends. In the first year it was 90%; in the second year I think it was the same percentage

Moderator: And so you expect the same now?

Latanya: Yeah

Moderator: Do you have a problem meeting the other 10% still?

Latanya: Yes, but last semester I was a part of Students Union and I applied for a grant and I got it

Moderator: Was that for this year?

Latanya: No, for last year

Moderator: Is everything ready for this year?

Latanya: Normally, you join the Students Union at the beginning of the school term.

Moderator: So in terms of the challenge now, are you worried about this school year at all?

Latanya: I always worry every year but as I say I don't let it worry me

Moderator: Are you going into your last year now?

Latanya: No, its 4 years

Moderator: Oh I thought it was three years, ok. So what other challenges do you think can come up? We are trying to figure out what else CSJP can do?

Latanya: Well, emotional challenges can come up basically at home because, as I said, I stay to myself. The relationship at home is not so good because you have this person fighting against that person and I am in the middle and whether I am there or not my name is called and that affects my schoolwork sometimes

Moderator: Do you feel that CSJP could have a more psychological component to it? Would it be useful or have you got enough counseling?

Latanya: The psychological component would be useful or they could have a mentorship programme or something on a Saturday or on weekends to facilitate youths; help them express themselves or talk them through certain things

Moderator: What about you specifically? Would that help you?

Latanya: Yeah, it would. But sometimes I don't talk much so most times you would see me reading or, if it gets too much, I go for a walk

Moderator: So that's how you deal with it? Apart form the mentorship, you haven't got anything to help you deal with all the psychological stuff. What other gaps do you see that CSJP can help with?

Latanya: I know funding is hard to get but for communities that don't have a community centre that would be a plus

Moderator: How would a community centre help you because you said you don't go out?

Latanya: Well it would help me with the peer tutoring. It would help me because sometimes I have to stand at the gate to help certain students.

Moderator: And does this provide an income for you?

Latanya: No

Moderator: No? You do it voluntarily? So you don't make any additional income, you just help?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: Why do you think you are that motivated to help?

Latanya: Well I like to see other persons learn or move forward, I don't like to be the one that's always going, know that there is somebody there that could use help. Even at school, I formed a study group with some of my classmates and I still push them to keep that study group

Moderator: Would you describe your community as a very violent one now?

Latanya: No. It has it's time but it's ok now

Moderator: Which community do you think has had more influence on you? Is it Fletchers Land or Allman Town?

Latanya: Fletchers Land

Moderator: Fletchers Land had a great influence on you

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: And how has Fletchers Land help to shape the way you see yourself and your mindset?

Latanya: Has it helped?

Moderator: Yes

Latanya: Well because of the different community programmes that they have and the influence of YOU being a part of that as well as...(muffledo....the influence it has on young people, especially me, going out to YOU and meeting other people from different communities and having different speakers coming to speak to us, that really helped me.

Moderator: One thing that just came to my mind – Do you think the outcomes would better if CSJP were to be intertwined with other programmes where you benefit from many different programmes or would you say that one programme like CSJP is sufficient?

Latanya: No, one programme is not sufficient because you are really going to need exposure to what other people are thinking, other ideas, we have a saying that ' two heads are better than one' and so it would be in the case of CSJP partnering with somebody else to help them. Most people think that CSJP does a lot of things but they don't know about every financial or organization and its challenges

Moderator: So it would be a good idea for them to partner?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: But which ones do you think would partner more effectively and produce more rounded results? You mentioned RISE and which other?

Latanya: Like different institutions; for example, Grace Kennedy, they have an after school programme as well as other institutions that have homework programmes but they are not known to the public. So, if CSJP could partner with Grace or ask Digicel to help them. You know Digical is always there helping so that would be good for them to get some support

Moderator: Do you feel that you have a lot of opportunities ahead of you?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: Have you always felt that way?

Latanya: Yes.....(Muffled)……because they make me realize that I cannot just limit myself to just one option. They have also helped me to know other influential persons and know about other programmes and meet other persons.

Moderator: Is there anything else about CSJP and its impact?

Latanya: Well other than the programme, I'd say the staff members are very supportive; they're like family friends.

Moderator: So they work not just with you but with your family? Is that the approach?

Latanya: They will check up, not like some organizations that sponsor you and you carry back your results to them; CSJP goes beyond that.

Moderator: In what way?

Latanya: Like the staff members ask, 'How are you?' and they ask after members of your family and about how you are doing in school, yeah they go beyond.

Moderator: They are very personal

Latanya: Yes and it is very helpful sometimes because you don't want to feel like you are benefitting from this but really no one knows you

Moderator: Are they different from other organizations in the community in that respect?

Latanya: Well I am not quite sure of the names of the other organizations but they are different

Moderator: In terms of just the personal touch or?

Latanya: No just generally

Moderator: What sort of differences do you see?

Latanya: They help persons and try to transform lives and minds as well but they go all out. They do not only limit themselves to a particular inner city but they adopt different communities.

Moderator: In terms of adding stronger support now, what do you think you will need? Apart from the school fees and the participation and the fact that you can develop your leadership skills, what form of added support do you think you would need? Anything further from CSJP you think you would need?

Latanya: Not that I can think of now

Moderator: Have your religious beliefs helped in any way?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: In what way?

Latanya: When I am at Church, I feel like family there's just the sense of peace.

Moderator: Is it church that has helped you to become, to deal with emotional issues? Do you think they are dealt with?

Latanya: Well I wouldn't say the church itself, because I grew up in church. It has helped somewhat but persons say I take everything for joke because I don't let anything bother me but its not that I take everything for joke,

it's just that the problem is there and attacking the person or lashing out will not solve the problem so ...I am this type of person...I do not answer you. You could curse me, or whatever, I just don't answer; persons would see me as soft. One thing I have told myself is it doesn't matter what my mother does or what she says I will never answer her back. Growing up, I feel that persons used that against me but that only makes me stronger. My younger sister and the older one as well, they all answer my mother and when she can't get at them she turns it on me because she knows I am not going to answer her. Over the years going to church you learn certain things, certain qualities and what to expect. I got saved in 2009 and that has helped me a lot because certain things I am not going to do. So that really helped me a lot and then I realized it was a pattern whenever she does not feel pleased talking to my big sister or my little sister she turns it on me. So I realize that this is her way of trying to pull me out so I just don't answer her. I realize, also, that if I don't answer her is a problem, if I try to answer her is a problem.

Moderator: CSJP has asked about the family but has it focused on your mother enough? Should they have been working on your mother?

Latanya: Yes. I tried to get her into CSJP programmes. She was a part of one of the HEART programmes then she didn't complete it.

Moderator: Why you think she didn't complete it?

Latanya: She said it was because of financial difficulties...the bus fare etc. But "if you want good your nose has to run" so if you have to walk, then walk. She doesn't know how I go to school but I go so if she really wanted it she would have pushed.

Moderator: Does she work?

Latanya: No

Moderator: She doesn't work? So how does she support herself?

Latanya: Well she doesn't work but as I said it's a family yard and...

Moderator: Everybody helps each other?

Latanya: My grandmother is an office attendant so her little pay goes towards the water bill and my uncle pays the light for our side but he is another story.

Moderator: What?

Latanya: He complains about everything!! For instance I don't watch TV or listen to the radio so I don't use a lot of light (electricity). I come home late from school and as morning comes I leave for school so I am hardly at

home. He complains about his light (electricity) bill and he has a bad habit of leaving the TV on. His baby's mother is on the computer while light on TV on; that is just their style. Yet, when the bill goes up, he curses. He knows that my mother doesn't work so she doesn't contribute; she does so only when she can get some money. Even so, but he is always complaining. I used to listen to the radio…to certain programmes when I am home from school. He complained about the light and pulled out the radio and I haven't seen it since. Ask me about the news I don't know anything because I don't watch TV. My friends say I have no life because I don't watch TV neither do I get time to watch TV because I would feel as if I am not doing anything productive

Moderator: So you work a lot? Is it to avoid the situation or…

Latanya: Sometimes

Moderator: In spite of the situation, though, do you feel that you will be okay?

Latanya: No I don't let it get to me. Sometimes it makes my head hurt but…

Moderator: You plan to remain living there?

Latanya: No!

Moderator: When do you plan to move?

Latanya: When I finish school and get a job.

Moderator: So that will be in another year

Latanya: Two years

Moderator: And then you plan to move out of the community or stay in Allman Town?

Latanya: I'll move out of the community but I will still be there to give back, as I always say no matter how far I get I always want to give back.

Moderator: So where would you go? Back to Fletchers Land?

Latanya: No, I am not sure.

Moderator: As long as it's not an inner city community?

Latanya: Nothing is wrong with an inner city community as long as you can be a positive influence.

Moderator: So you would stay in an inner city community

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: What you like about it?

Latanya: Well I don't go on the road and you won't know I am at home unless you see me because I don't even go in the yard; I just stay in the house

Moderator: So if you don't like what's happening in the home why do you stay inside?

Latanya: Well you know some persons when they come home they go on the road? Well I don't have anything on the road

Moderator: You just do your school work?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: But you still don't like what's going on inside your home

Latanya: I have to just live with it.

Moderator: So, you accept it in one sense and fight against it in another sense

Latanya: Yes, kind of controversial

Moderator: No everybody is like that. Everybody fights in the way that they know. Some people might fight with violence because that's what they know. You fight in terms of being productive and probably overworking... so that may be another problem that you have to think about later on

Latanya: Yeah I think about that sometimes because my friends think I am a workaholic but I just find myself always being busy

Moderator: Do you love your mother?

Latanya: Yes and I want her to see that I try but sometimes it's even her behaviour that makes me upset

Moderator: What is it about her behavior?

Latanya: Sometimes she feels she is still young or a teenager I don't know

Moderator: Why do you say that? What does she do? Is it he way she dresses?

Latanya: That's one and all the partying; sometimes it just hurts me.

Moderator: She has one partner or a number?

Latanya: I don't know about her life where that is concerned but I know she goes out a lot

Moderator: And that disappoints you?

Latanya: Sometimes it would be nice to have your mother around and not just in title only and then she also says hurtful words. For instance, I work every summer and she will say "Oh she is working; she must be in some big job or something". But it's a summer job! People think I am working a lot of money. Or sometimes she just comes out with some random questions, "Beg you a money nuh" but where must I get it from?

Moderator: She asks you for money?

Latanya: Where must I get it from? At one point I said to her "Mommy you're asking me for money? Do you know if I eat at school? Do you know if I am ok? If I am learning?"

Moderator: You said you had younger siblings. Are you more like a mother for your younger siblings?

Latanya: That's what it seems and that's what my mother pushes me to be. Sometimes she is very disrespectful and you have to just tolerate somebody so it's like that but I am always there for her

Moderator: What do you mean by saying your mother pushes you to be mother? What does she do?

Latanya: Sometimes she is not there. For example, this summer I said I wanted a break from the house and everything and, knowing the situation with my uncle and everything, so I went to my daughters god-parents and my mother was calling me to go home to stay with my sister; she is 17. She'll even call me at work. Every time she calls me it's this big fuss and I say: "You are her mother why cant you stay with her?" which leads to more cursing. Sometimes its like I really don't have any life.

Moderator: Is it just your sister or do you have a younger brother too?

Latanya: No my brother is older

Moderator: How did your father die?

Latanya: Gunshot. He died abroad when I was 8.

Moderator: Was he involved in a gang or anything like that?

Latanya: Not sure

Moderator: So have you dealt with that?

Latanya: I tried up until High School but sometimes it's hard. The other day my mother got me upset because she was calling me to stay with (babysit) my sister and I asked her why she can't stay with her and she resorted to saying how she was young and pregnant and she was there for me. She always uses that but I try not to allow her to get to me.

Moderator: So in a sense, I can look at your face and see how fragile you still feel and it makes me wonder about the psychological components because there are all sorts of issues…ongoing issues…and your still in the same context and even though you are pushing very hard, the context is not changing. Is t getting worse?

Latanya: Sometimes I question myself and ask: "What is it?" Is it that they don't like me? Is it because I am pushing myself to achieve certain things? Why I am being treated like this or what? Sometimes a weird question will pop up like why doesn't my mother like me? Did I rob something from her?

Moderator: Is it a sort of envy?

Latanya: I don't know. Sometimes it makes me feel really bad.

Moderator: When she quarrels with you what does she say?

Latanya: For example, when you were pregnant I was there for you and you are ungrateful. Nobody remembers my birthday but being the sort of person I am I love to celebrate birthdays so I would always give gifts to my older and younger sisters and to my mother; not one birthday passes where I don't give her something. Her last birthday was last year and I know she was going to say something but I wanted to surprise her so although I got her gift I waited until in the night to give her but before she got it she grumbled about not getting anything. But no one remembers my birthday not even my own mother. She says hurtful things like "I know that you hate me and I wont get anything form you". How can she say that too me?

Moderator: How old is she?

Latanya: I don't know if she reach 50 yet but she is around that age.

Moderator: When you think about your mother, do you think that there are issues that she should have dealt with too?

Latanya: Yes (laughter)

Moderator: So if you were to think about your biggest challenge now, would it be your mother?

Latanya: Not really.

Moderator: What would it be?

Latanya: Somewhat my mother but more the environment that I live in

Moderator: And not the community, it's the family?

Latanya: Family. Sometimes it makes me think of weird stuff like I would be better off outside of the home. When I was young I used to wish someone would adopt me because when my father died and my mother left couple days after so it was just me and my grandmother and my father's family

Moderator: So your mother left you when you were about 10?

Latanya: No my father went away when I was 4 then couple years after she went away

Moderator: So you were left with your grandmother and his side of the family and then she came back

Latanya: When I was in grade 8; that's when her Dad died.

Moderator: Why do you think she came back?

Latanya: For the funeral and everything

Moderator: And then you just went back with her?

Latanya: No, that was in grade 8 and I went to live with her in 2007

Moderator: Why did you go back to live with her?

Latanya: Because I was pregnant in high school and I didn't know what was going to happen next.

Moderator: So you left the community because of that?

Latanya: No. Everything was crashing down and I didn't want my grandmother to know

Moderator: You regret it? Having a child?

Latanya: No because I have learnt a lot and everything happened for a reason and sometimes I think that if I was not pressured so much I would not be able to push myself

Moderator: I was just wondering about the last statement about pushing yourself to get out of the situation. Do you think you are getting out of it or you still carrying it with you?

Latanya: I wouldn't say 'carrying' but I think its ongoing for a time. I know it will go on until I finish school

Moderator: Ok but what I am asking is having finished school, you haven't resolved it you can still carry it. You know what I mean?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: So I am just wondering about that.

Latanya: Finishing school, I won't carry it because I know that by finishing school I would be able to help myself be somewhere more comfortable.

Moderator: You don't feel that you are carrying anything from childhood up?

Latanya: I used to think, when my mother went away, that she never cared enough because knowing that my father went away, then she went away, she never cared enough to stay. She should have stayed. But she didn't and she came back when I was in 9th grade

Moderator: So you still feel that way?

Latanya: No not really. I kind of got over that except for the part where she always trying to put words in my mouth

Moderator: People face all kinds of challenges and yours doesn't seem to be necessarily your community. Some people have a wider context problem with politics etc. You haven't mentioned anything like that. You just focus on family and your Mom specifically. Given that what would you say you need most to meet the challenges?

Latanya: A mentorship programme

Moderator: Is YOU sufficient?

Latanya: It's inactive. I joined it from Fletchers Land

Moderator: Is it inactive in Fletchers Land or in Allman Town?

Latanya: Fletchers Land, not sure about Allman Town

Moderator: Why don't you go to the one in Allman Town?

Latanya: Police hosts youth club meeting on a Thursday and on a Thursday I have school and that's when I do most of my extra-curricular activities

Moderator: Do you know of any other intervention beyond CSJP? Can you think of another intervention you would want?

Latanya: Well I saw this thing on TV or heard it on radio about teaching.

Moderator: So you would go back and teach?

Latanya: And help out others?

Moderator: Why do you have that passion to help out?

Latanya: I don't know why I just love it.

Moderator: How much do you need to save to supplement your school fees? I know they pay 90% what is your 10%?

Latanya: I am not sure of the figure for the entire year but for Semester One, it's roughly $170,000

Moderator: Is this for one semester?

Latanya: Yes

Moderator: And I am not sure what Semester Two is going to be like.

The End.

LIFE STORY 3

Name: Kerry

Community: Waterhouse

Age: 19

Sex: Female

Siblings: Kerry has 9 brothers and sisters; all belong to her father. Her Mother got pregnant at 16 or 17. Kerry's parents were not married and do not live together now.

Household: Kerry lives with her mother, grandmother, aunts and brother in one family yard.

Education: Kerry's mother finished high school. She does not know her father's education status.

Kerry has grown up in a family where her sole means of support is her mother, who contributes as much as is feasible. Her father abandoned her early and Kerry does not consider herself as having a male parent.

There are varying factors that have caused and continue to cause personal discomfort. She recounts that when her mother 'left' while she was in Grade 5, everything "turned upside down". In order to improve life for the family, Kerry mother transported drugs to Barbados. She was caught and imprisoned. In response, Kerry's grades and behaviour plummeted. Her aunt's abusive treatment of her compounded her despair. Although the violence imposes constraints, she feels most repressed within her house, which she describes as a very divisive context.

Kerry has grown to accept certain beliefs, which reproduces fears that limit her progress. For example, her grandmother has convinced her that her dead grandfather is attempting to kill her. She believes that her 'unexplained' illnesses, which occur during major exams, are byproducts of his continued attempts. Further, she classifies the house as haunted and surmises that this is causing poor family relations. With some reasoning she concludes that the problem may reside with the family and not the house.

Kerry is angry and has been for some time. She fears that this anger will spill over and affect her daughter. Already, she admits yelling at the two-year old when annoyed. Kerry knows that she needs to exercise self-control and requires help with learning to navigate her household.

CSJP has played a monumental role, allowing her to continue her education and encouraging her, even when her performance is substandard. She appears to thrive on the personal attention she receives from CSJP; she describes staff as the family she has never had.

Kerry is astute and analytical. She recognizes that while contributing financially to her education is critical, this will be of little use if her home environment remains at it is. Thus, a family centered programme is urgent; so too is attention to her psychosocial skills.

Moderator: Tell me about your parents…

Kerry: Well for one I would not say that I have a father. He has never been a figure in my life really. When I was in Grade 5, my Mommy left to try to make life better, but things went wrong and that was the only time I can say that he stood up for me. It was when I passed the GSAT. I guess he was ashamed to see that I made it so far without him…so because of embarrassment and to say for God sake my Mommy wasn't here. So he had to step up to the plate in 7th grade to take care of books and school expenses but beyond that nothing…

Moderator: That has been it?

Kerry: That has been it.

Moderator: How about your Mom?

Kerry: She has always been there through thick and thin. No matter what life throws at us, she is just always there. I mean, she is my real motivation.

Moderator: Okay. Are the rest of your family supportive? What about your grandmother?

Kerry: well Grandma yes, but I got some aunts that are real…They are just not there for me really. I mean if I come home from school with a 75% they won't be like yeah….they would be more like "Where is the 100%?". I mean I am just human, you can't expect 100% at once. They are just…sometimes they annoy me but I have got to live with it for now. They are not really supportive of anybody really, besides themselves.

Moderator: And they all live in the same yard?

Kerry: At times I get away from them. I met this lady in 7th grade at high school because I play netball. She is not the coach really but she manages the netball team so at times I would go away to her house for about a week or two just to get away from them. I have a cousin, my best friend actually, I get away at her house at times too.

Moderator: Is there a lot a lot of tension? Is it that people argue a lot?

Kerry: My brother feels that the house is his. He wants to decide who comes and when. None of my friends can come over. It always creates problems. He comments on how I am operating the yard as if it's a big yard. He wants to basically fight everyone out. I had to be with my uncle

because we got in an argument because I saw him on my bed and since no one is helping me wash my sheets…so we got in an argument and he said he's going for "his thing" and let's see who is bad and then my Daddy heard and he came up and started a big feud. The police got involved and a lot of stuff like that and I had to be with my uncle for a while.

Moderator: Is it hard living in a yard?

Kerry: Very! Very hard; very very hard

Moderator: Do you share everything?

Kerry: Is just one bathroom, just one kitchen so we have to share everything but in the kitchen…….(recording jumps. We don't really correspond much. If we do talk its for like two weeks and then we are at it again and then because of some reason we talk again and then the next two weeks we are at it again; its just always a tug and war between us.

Moderator: And that has been all of your life basically?

Kerry: All my life. (recording jumps)….

Moderator: What is it like in the yards nearby and in the community itself?

Kerry: The community itself now: gunshot is always firing, people dying 24/7…the works. You can't be on the road too late as a girl. I mean I am a teenager and I do party but because of the surroundings I can't because I am scared to come home at 2 in the morning. I can't walk form the bus stop to my house because I am afraid that someone is going to rob me, draw me away, do something unthinkable. I don't really go out, not really. I mean I was going to work the other day and I was barred in by police. A man got shot and no one could come out of their houses. They took away a soldier, they couldn't find him so they were digging me up out of my bed It's rough…really rough.

Moderator: What do you mean: "digging you up out of bed?"

Kerry: Because they were looking

Moderator: Oh they thought he was in there?

Kerry: They were searching everywhere. Everybody had to come out of their houses but I was sleeping when they came and my Mommy told them that I was in my room and she doubted very much if I had on any clothes and they came in anyway and told me to get up and come out.

Moderator: Were you wearing clothes?

Kerry: Yes I had on my night clothes but I mean they are strangers so…..

Moderator: recording jumps……do people get along?

Kerry: Yes, that is the strange part of it. The females, they argue over men sometimes, as in every garrison, but we get along quite fine…water parties, the works. We have football competitions, everything. We get along fine but when the gunmen decide that it's their time, we have to give them the road to do what they want.

Moderator: Are girls involved in gangs?

Kerry: It's just mostly guys who are in the gangs…….(recording jumps).... You have girl crews but its very rare that they get into arguments, very rare and if they do its about who is having sex with whose boyfriend and stuff like that but its very rare that you find them fighting and stuff like that.

Moderator: Inaudible ....recording jumps. How was school for you when you were younger?

Kerry: It was ok until 5th grade

Moderator: What happened in fifth grade?

Kerry: My Mommy left so everything just turned; my life itself turned upside down.

Moderator: Wait you said she left, for how long?

Kerry: For two years.

Moderator: To where? Did she leave for the States?

Kerry: Well what I heard was that she was trying to make life better and what she did, I did not appreciate it, whether it turned out bad or good I didn't really appreciate it. I thought if we are in this, we are in this together and don't go elsewhere and make my life even worse and that what she did.

Moderator: Where did she go?

Kerry: She went to Barbados but she was carrying weed (marijuana).

Moderator: Oh

Kerry: And she got caught and that was where my life took the wrong turn.

Moderator: What did you feel? Was it embarrassment?

Kerry: It wasn't embarrassment really because in the ghetto, people don't really look at it as embarrassment because they are saying its to make things better and if everything had worked out …

Moderator: It would have been ok?

Kerry: It would have been ok. I would more think of it as a loss because the one important person in your life the one person who always stands for you is no longer there. At one point in time, there was no contact between her and me; there was no contact at all, because the jail that she was in got

burnt down and quite a few people died. We did not know if she was one of those persons. It was not until about 3 months after when they relocated her that we heard from her and that was kind of a relief to know that she was ok and whatever but then still....

Moderator and Kerry together: (recording jumps) Primary school

Moderator: And you did your exams in fifth grade?

Kerry: Did it yes. I did it but...

Moderator: And how was that?

Kerry: In 5th grade, it was rough; everything went wrong. In sixth grade, I accepted that she wasn't here and I had to make her proud. I couldn't let her come and see me going to Penwood; that just wouldn't be right. So I tried, I tried. My teacher, she gravitated towards me so I got free private lessons, free Saturday classes, the works. She stood by me; there was study group and everything but everything just crashed on the day of GSAT because I guess I got an emotional shock: everybody's Mommy was there and I had no one and I began to cry and she told me that everything was going to be alright (sobbing) I must just go and do my best because it was only good enough...recording jumps.... In the end, I got a good school, my first choice, so I should have been happy but I wasn't.

Moderator: Which school was that?

Kerry: Camperdown

Moderator: Tell me about Camperdown High and why weren't you happy?

Kerry: I could care less about what happen.....recording jumps.....My aunt and I, we got into an argument and she told me not to come back inside the yard and I had to be staying with my friends. I was 12 and had to be on the road

Moderator: You were 12?

Kerry: 12! Because she wanted to beat me and I decided that I wasn't going to take anymore of her beating because they were nonsense! She would beat me if she saw me with friends and a guy was there. She would say "You have man" and the works. She has done me a huge amount of bad! She did a lot of cruel things to me for that 2 years...a lot. I got spanked everyday for nonsense, for no reason at all. Sometimes my punishment was no dinner. Other times, she closed the door and no matter how my grandmother told her to open the door and let me in, she cursed. She told my grandmother that I should sleep outside and I had to be staying with a friend for a couple months. Even when Mommy came back.... I was on holidays to go into 8th grade in September and when my Mommy

came back I wasn't even at the house. I wasn't even living with her at the time. I knew that she left in the days and she left with my brother and because she left, I snuck into the house to take out some clothes and then my other aunt told me that my Mommy was coming and I told her I don't care because I don't live here. At that point in life I just felt that it was over. I did basically no work in 7th grade. I came about 31 out of about 42 students. I did nothing.

Moderator: Were you involved in a gang?

Kerry: It wasn't a gang really but I was a trouble- maker. I troubled everybody, I cursed teachers; I did all that was bad in 7th grade.

Moderator: Did the teachers understand?

Kerry: No they didn't. They didn't.

Moderator: Did they even ask?

Kerry: Well they actually sent me to a boot camp in 7th grade because they thought I had some anger issues and I needed some form of self-control. They didn't really understand what was happening when I left school because I am not really open to people since I don't want people to take anything and use it against me at the end of the day. I am not really the person to open up to everybody. I pick, chose and refuse who to see and....So they didn't really know until I went to board in 7th grade and I was on the list to be expelled. But there was a man who decided that he is going to send me to this boot camp and see where I can go from there because its really hard to see someone in 7th grade get expelled. And worse, when I went to the board meeting, there was no one there with me because my Mommy wasn't here. My aunt decided that she wasn't coming and Grandma was sick. (My grandma bled through her nose for about three months because her pressure went sky high because she didn't know where I was; my mother was in the situation that she was; and because of the way my aunt treated my brother and me. She couldn't take anymore so she broke down right there and then.) So he decided that he was going to send me to the camp and try to work with me from there. I came back in 8th grade and Mommy came back so that is where things got back on track. For the term of September to December, I came fifth out of a class of about 43 students. That was a big step... from 31st to 5th! So that was a big step and from there they sent me to the guidance counselor and then they realized that maybe it was because Mommy wasn't here so I was suffering from some sort of distress or something. The behaviour really didn't change there so I went back to board in 8th grade and the man decided that he doesn't know what else he can do for me and they were going to put me out of school and now the principal of the school said that my grades were good so they were

going to work with me and try their best. It was then that I really opened myself to what they had to offer me and just worked with the programme I guess that's why I finished high school.

Moderator: How many subjects did you get?

Kerry: I got 5, with two distinctions. It should have been 3 but I didn't have the money to send to Barbados to review my paper because I got straight A's in Literature and they gave me a two (B) I don't know why but I got a distinction in Math and English, a two (B) in Literature and a three in Geography.

Moderator: What you did afterwards?

Kerry: Afterwards, I applied for sixth form and I got through. On the first day of school…I thought we got privileges in sixth form… they saw me with a phone and I was expelled for this phone.

Moderator: You were expelled because of a phone?

Kerry: For a phone! Then I said I wasn't going to even bother. I was just going to sit at home and do what I see everybody else doing because that's the life. But then there were two persons who really changed me and they pushed me to the edge and I got myself into another school - the stress to come by the CSJP office because they had already paid my Camperdown school fees and the stress to transfer that money to Maths Unlimited and Maths Unlimited required even more money but I guess it's the grace of God. What is to be has to be.

Moderator: Tell me about the two persons.

Kerry: Mr. Simmons and Ms. Adams

Moderator: Oh ok. How did you meet them?

Kerry: I met them on the occasion that I got expelled and had to come by the office.

Moderator: Who told you about the office though? How did you know about CSJP?

Kerry: How did I know about CSJP? It was in 9th grade that my mommy's best friend told her about this programme. She didn't know what it was exactly but she just told her that she should give her my report and things like and she was going to see if she could get help. My mommy alone had to take care of my brother and me. My brother's father, he got sentenced to 25 years and he has only served 5 out of the 25. So my mommy's friend decided that she wanted to help. I was on the programme from 9th grade and it was really my mommy's friend who introduced her to it.

Moderator: And Mr. Simmons and Ms. Adams?

Kerry: What can I say? They were there when I needed someone. I mean, they were complete strangers who just turned into incredible friends. They were the ones who encouraged me not to give up: life doesn't end here; it still goes on. Life may kick you down but you are the one to decide if you really want to get up, whether you want to push forward or you want to stay lying on the ground. There was no doubting me for a second, not for a second.

Moderator: Tell me about Maths Unlimited

Kerry: We had a problem with the law class because they lost a teacher and that was like 2 months before exams and things got really hectic. There were classes on Sunday, some ridiculous hours on a Sunday…and so I decided to drop the class because I can't work with pressure. I know I am not really good at it so I just dropped the class but I pursued it still with the Communication Studies, Sociology and Pure Math. Well, I failed Pure Math but I succeeded with the next two and, this year, I completed both units for Law and the second unit for Sociology. Therefore, I am awaiting those results.

Moderator: At what age did you get pregnant?

Kerry: I won't say it's by mistake or by accident because she is my pride and my joy but it was at age 16

Moderator: Where were you then? Were you in high school?

Kerry: Yes, I was in high school. I was reckless; I just didn't care. I don't know what was going through my head at that time. I guess I was young and naïve. I was just running about the place, wanting to explore and then it happened, what could I do? I am not from a family that encourages abortions but things turned out for the best. I am just one of the lucky ones I may say because I got someone who didn't deny it for a second and he has been there. I mean she doesn't live with me; she lives with him and he does everything. I don't even buy her an icy mint (mint sweet) I see her when she comes by me in the summer. I don't call and ask for anything because I think it would be too much to ask him.

Moderator: How is it for you living without her though?

Kerry: At times I feel lonely and stuff but it's for the best. I know I can't maintain her; I can't manage her at the moment so I just leave everything in God's hands because He knows what's best. If it reaches the point where I can't take it anymore and I need to see her, I find myself at their house. But besides that, it's just summer holidays that I see her or in the Christmas.

Moderator: How are you coping?

Kerry: It doesn't make me happy because I want her to be where I am but where I am I don't think it's the best thing for her and I have to look out for her

interests as well as mine. Where I am is not stable; I can't have her living there. I know what I had to go through and I don't want the same for her. Where she is now is best and I am just working with it until… I told myself I wasn't going to send her back home but I am second guessing it because I didn't have a job but then I did quite well in the internship and they called me back so I am considering keeping her now.

Moderator: Will the father try to prevent you?

Kerry: Not really, not really; I mean who can? She is mine. He just has to live with it. He has another one; he has a wife and another kid so he just has to live with it.

Moderator: Where are you working now?

Kerry: I am working with Pollard and Associates; it's a law firm in Parkington Plaza. I do receptionist work, filing and some secretarial work.

Moderator: Is this where you want to be?

Kerry: No it's not where I want to be, I mean I wanted to be a lawyer but now I am second guessing myself.

Moderator: Why?

Kerry: It's going to take a long time to accomplish and that's a lot, a lot of money

Moderator: That's the strange feeling?

Kerry: Yes, it's a lot of money and then to go to UWI and balance her, balance work I don't know if I have the strength. So I am second-guessing. Maybe I'll choose journalism; maybe a teacher or something.

Moderator: Before I ask you what I want to ask you tell me about why you think you don't have any patience?

Kerry: Do you mean with her? Yes, it's true. At times, I try not to talk to her when I am angry because I know how it is when I get out so I try my best. If I see I am getting angry I leave the house because if she comes to me and if she even says 'hey', I am going to eat her head off. She does some things at times that make me want to hit the hell out of her but I try not to because I know where its going to go from there. I am going to get angry and slap her hard and I don't want it to get there.

Moderator: Have you ever slapped her hard?

Kerry: Once

Moderator: What do you feel is the root of your anger?

Kerry: It was just how I was brought up. I was brought up too rough. There was no mildness; there was nothing soft about my life so I guess that's where it stems from. I had to be running all my life up and down, from here to

there; everyone around me deals with me with aggression. So I guess I grew to believe that that was the acceptable thing to do. As a child, I came to believe that everyone behaves this way and so why not join but growing up and being around other people I realize that this is not the only way. Not because aunts do it uncles and everybody does it…I have grown to control it a bit.

Moderator: Have you had counseling?

Kerry: Well I wouldn't say counseling because she wasn't a professional; she was a woman from the community. There were times when my mommy and I were having problems and she would be the one who would come in and talk to us but she was not really a psychiatrist as such.

Moderator: When you think about your life, what is it about CSJP that makes so much difference?

Kerry: I am very very grateful for what they did because if it wasn't for them I wouldn't be where I am today. Because I know that my Mommy could not afford Maths Unlimited, she couldn't even afford Camperdown at $25,000 for 6th form. She struggled to pay the $8000 from grade 7 to 11. So I wouldn't finish high school if it weren't for their intervention in my life.

Moderator: When I speak to people they tell me about all the good points but I do wonder whether it would have been even more helpful if the programme could do more for the whole in the family.

Kerry: It could help more but the way I look at things is that I didn't put this there but I am getting it anyway so I look at it like a blessing. Once you can fix one thing, I don't expect the company to be superman and be fixing all of my problems. I can't expect them to do every single thing for me but where they can drop in and say "Hey I am here to help" it is greatly appreciated. If it were that there is enough funding to extend to families yes it would make a better impact.

Moderator: I am not talking about giving everybody but I am concerned when you observe that you are going back to a harmful home environment.

Kerry: Yes, everybody is going back to the same thing. Yes, you are giving us education but when it comes to home there is still something lacking. There are still challenges; we are still facing a lot of things. So yes, I do believe that it would make a huge difference. If I am comfortable--- that has been proven, because I was in 31st position I was not comfortable and when I got comfort that allowed me to put my grades up there. So I know that if I am going home to somewhere comfortable where everybody is embracing me and everybody believes in me then I will put out more work. If I used to give 50%, I would then give 75% until it gradually

reaches 100%. The more appreciative people are of what I give, then the more I feel that I need to give some more. So I guess that it could be extended… even counseling for families be cause sometimes you get some body language from the people you wonder what's going through their minds. Sometimes you wonder to yourself what's going through their minds if their body reaction is like that.

Moderator: So now you are working?

Kerry: Yes I am working for now

Moderator: And then what do you plan?

Kerry: That's what I see for now: work and school

Moderator: Are you still at Math Unlimited?

Kerry: Yes

Moderator: And when do you finish?

Kerry: We have another round of exams that's June coming

Moderator: And that leads you to University?

Kerry: Yes

Moderator: Which you ought to go

Kerry: Yes, this is just preparation for the big thing. And I wouldn't even call UWI the big thing because after UWI, it would straight to Norman Manley. If you pass the course at UWI, you automatically have a spot in Norman Manley. W hen you go to Utech or any of the other colleges you have to do an exam for them to accept you at Norman Manley. So UWI is the better choice.

Moderator: What are the fees like?

Kerry: By the time I get there, you're looking at one million dollars

Moderator: Is this for the year?

Kerry: Yes for the year. (Recording jumps) The best thing I see is to go on my own. That's what I told my Mommy but its' breaking down a relationship in a sense because she believes that I am not ready. And I am saying let us get out of it then. She says she can't leave her mother so basically she wants to carry everyone with us.

Moderator: (Laughter) So the whole yard is going to move to a new yard? (Laughter)….. Is the main problem now for you the yard and Waterhouse itself? Do the wider political and economic context pose challenges for you?

Kerry: No it's not political and I wouldn't even say it's the wider community because I know how to walk and hold my head straight and alienate myself from everyone, as if they don't exist. I guess it's the yard itself because I can lock myself away from the community but I can't lock myself away from the house because I need to go into the house to lock myself away from the community so its the yard itself. Its really my chill spot that's the problem. I have to find a chill spot for myself.

Moderator: If we were to have a comprehensive intervention now, something that you think would set you on the right path .....what would address your challenges? Because you said you want to go to Norman Manley but you carry a lot of anger...so what a comprehensive intervention entail?

Kerry: In order to attack what I lack academically, I need to start from home. It would need to start there. I might get rid of it someday somehow because I have grown to learn how to control myself---count from 1 to 10 the works, but whenever I step in, as soon I get to the gate, I take on a new image. Regardless of how I was smiling outside and speak nicely to people, when I reach the gate is a different me. It's like a duppy (ghost) is in that place stalking me yes, because every time I reach the gate every thing just changes, facial expression, body language, everything changes dramatically too.

Moderator: You are the second young person and I have talked to four now who have told me about ghost and duppies and all of that. Do you really believe in it?

Kerry: I don't know if it's belief. I don't know. It was just how I was brought up, just that. If I grew with someone who believes in it I would grow to believe in it and then if I grew with someone who didn't believe then I wouldn't believe. My Grandma is a Bishop, let's get that out of the way and she is always talking a lot of things that go on. She told me that my grandfather wanted to kill me when I was small .

Moderator: Your grandfather wanted to kill you?

Kerry: Yes, because he died when I Mommy was 2 so he doesn't really know my mother. But they said that at times I just got sick for no reason at all. Nobody knows why and then they found out that my Dad was beating my Mommy so they were saying that probably it's my grandfather who wanted to attack me because he cant attack my father; that's what they always say. Then each time that I got sick she is always crying and saying that the one person that she thinks is going to make everything better... someone is trying to do me something... So I grew to believe in it because for some strange reason once it reaches exam time I have some illnesses, which are not minor illnesses. It's either that I have to do an operation or I am taking a lot of medication...Every year from 6th grade, I

don't know if its stress or what but when I was going to do GSAT, as I said, there was the emotional breakdown. When I was going to do CXC's, I had to take out my appendix and I could hardly go to do my exams. Then when I was doing the first set of Cape subjects I was diagnosed with ulcer and I had to be in the hospital for days; I almost missed my first exam because of it. Up to today, no doctor knows my complaint; nobody knows what's wrong with me. All they are doing is sending me to go do ultrasound, blood test and still nothing...and as soon as exam finishes I am back to normal again. So I kind of believe in it now that something is wrong with me for true.

Moderator: Do you believe that someone is trying to attack you?

Kerry: For real, I don't know... I don't know

Moderator: And you don't think that it's your belief in that could probably cause it

Kerry: That could possibly cause it. But it keeps on happening from I was smaller and it keeps on happening. Every time that there is something big that I need to focus on, there is always some form of illness to put me off track to let me not look in the book. I don't know, I don't know, maybe its stress

Moderator: Do you think you are afraid of big things?

Kerry: Probably, probably. Maybe that's why I love Asafa because we are always there no matter what. If I take class tests, monthly tests, I am on top but once it comes to the exam I have a breakdown.

Moderator: You were saying that your Grandmother was saying that you are the only person that can turn things around for the entire family. Does that burden you?

Kerry: It's kind of a burden. It was worse when I went to sit CXC. I had a cousin who sat it and she got 8 distinctions. She's living in the country. So then there's that burden of she getting all ones (As) and everybody expecting the same of me and then there's the house crisis...where I live... Everything just added up and I really got stressed out. I doubt I looked in a book, I think the only book I took up was Fences; that was a Literature/Drama book...and every time I took up the book I was seeing a totally different thing from what's in the book so I just put it back down. Probably, it's just the big exams that I am just scared of.

Moderator: You have to think about whether its' just exams or big events.

Kerry: I think it's just exams.

Moderator: You realize that we have expanded the whole psychological thing...So let's come back now to the question of the comprehensive intervention

and what it would look like. You're probably going to say financial support…that's one thing

Kerry: Yeah that's one, but it makes no sense to support me financially when at the end of the day…when I say financially I mean school fee wise…it makes no sense and at the end of the day I will look at it as….it makes no sense you go the extra mile and you pay my school fees, you buy my books my uniform the works but then I still going back into that house, that haunted house.

Moderator: Haunted house

Kerry: Yeah, that haunted house because nobody else behaves the way that they do; nobody else on the road. Every other family tries to come together….Something is really wrong.

Moderator: Let me ask you. Do you know anything about the older people in your family, apart from your grandmother? How did they relate?

Kerry: I don't really know much, but I know that my grandmother's brother he, alienated himself from everyone because said that if he stays with them, he won't accomplish anything in life and I understand why he said that because everybody is trying to pull down everybody. If the pit is to be drawn, everybody is watching who is going to put the most money in; that's just how they behave. Nobody comes together and says alright if its $2000, we will split it or if it's 5 of us, everybody pays this amount. No, when the bill comes, everybody's going to say I use the bathroom less or I use less water. I have an aunt, you know what she did the other day when the water bill came, she stopped using the pipe. She literally stopped using the pipe because she decided that she is not giving a red cent towards the bill. She goes next door every morning; seriously, that's how they are.

Moderator: Ok, so your family is very divided and has been for some time

Kerry: From I have know myself, that is the way it has been

Moderator: And apparently the older members behaved the same

Moderator: I just want you to look at what I am saying in terms of things passing down

Kerry: He wants to fight out everyone out of it. He fights everybody.

Moderator: You figure if all of you were moved out of the same haunted house, to a different house …

Kerry: No, all of us can't move.

Moderator: So the haunting is not with the house then right?

Kerry: All of us can't go to the same place. Some of us have to leave.

Moderator: That's what I mean…so probably the house is not really haunted

Kerry: It's the people who are in it.

(Side chatter)

Moderator: I think you are missing the point I am trying to make about the generation…

Kerry: One passing down to the next…

Moderator: Well tell me about the comprehensive intervention now because if CSJP were to decide that they want to do something deeper – paying the fees is one thing, moving you out of the house is another thing. What else is there in terms of you and the anger issues and the self-confidence issues?

Kerry: Well I can't ask for so much

Moderator: No, no, no I am not saying that CSJP can do all of this, I am asking you what your needs are.

Kerry: Probably some counseling…yeah that would be needed.

Moderator: So you think if you got counseling and went back into the same context you would be able to navigate it better?

Kerry: Yes probably they would teach me how to just…..probably they would teach me some form of technique to just block out everything.

Moderator: When you go on a job, do you go with the same anger as well?

Kerry: No I am a different person

Moderator: I ask because when you came in you said you wanted to curse somebody who works with you…

Kerry: That lady now…everyone wants to attack her. She sits in the office and all she does is Facebook, the works. She is on the phone and she talks and talks and talks and then when she knows that the boss is on her way to the office she tries to rush everybody to do work because she is the personal assistant. It's either that she's rushing you to go to the bank although she knew it was supposed to be done from morning. Even the other day the bearer got upset with her and cursed her. But at work I am ok, cool; everybody is a family.

Moderator: Ok and that's the work place

Kerry: Yes because there aren't many people; I doubt if it 12 of us.

Moderator: Tell me how you regard Mr. Simmons and Ms. Adams? Do you see them as family?

Kerry: Well from what I have I do consider them family. Because from what I have…..the effect that they do have on me none of my blood relatives

does, none of them. Maybe just my mother and my grandmother have similar effect. What I expect of a family, what I expect they are supposed to do… they are the ones who basically played the role in my life so I do consider them family.

Moderator: What do they do? Do they call you? What sort of role do they play?

Kerry: Well, for one, they are motivators. They're always pushing me and telling me that I can do it. They are appreciative of everything that I do. If I come in with 50%, they say "good work" and they press me and saying make sure the next time…..they are not bashing me as they see the 50. They say, "Yes, good work" and then they would say "You need to improve on this and that". They call me sometimes just to check on me" 'You ok', everything. Whether I am far or near, they are always doing that and no matter what they are just always looking out for me…always… because even the programme…well the programme started a long time before so basically I was squeezed in …they are always looking out for me.

Moderator: Ok I know that they pay for you to go to Maths Unlimited. What other parts of the programme do you participate in?

Kerry: Yes and the community has a group that helps others so when it's near to exams, the subjects that I am good in, I would normally go and give back.

Moderator: So they really focus on civic responsibility…

Kerry: Yes

The End

(This interview ended a bit sooner than desired since Kerry's baby was uncomfortable)

LIFE STORY 4

(Family) Life History- Fletchers land

Pseudonym: The Montana family: Tony: 18 years; Jean: 21 years; Mom: 45 years

Community: Fletchers Land

Siblings: Jean has 4 children; 1 belongs to a separate father

Occupation: Mom works as an insetter at the Gleaner. She also does hairdressing. Father works as an electrician

Education: Mother finished secondary school; father finished secondary school but has no subjects. Tony attends Excelsior High; Jean attended Holy Childhood High and is currently reading for a degree at the University of the West Indies; Mother is completing her degree in Social Work at the UWI.

When Ms Montana's relationship with her children's father disintegrated, she was forced to provide for all five children alone, except for the financial and emotional support that her mother supplied. After her mother's death, Ms. Montana struggled financially and emotionally. Determined to parent her children as she was best able, Ms. Montana got certified as a hairdresser so that she could be present in their upbringing. With her motivation, all the children succeeded and were exemplary in school.

CSJP was instrumental in teaching life skills to the children. Importantly, CSJP also provided financial support of a magnitude and with the consistency that would allow the children to attain their potential. As Ms. Montana was part of the Citizen's Association, she was apprised of varying opportunities; she also became involved in CSJP and was instrumental in starting the parenting programme. Ms Montana notes that she was previously abusive (verbally) to her children (note that her partner was, similarly, abusive to her before their relationship ended); however, the parenting programme was instrumental in changing her parenting skills, such that she became a much better mother to her children. Further, with financial support, she was able to attend university.

This family history is important because it shows the type of comprehensive support that appears most beneficial for youth development. Further, it depicts the importance of (positive) resilience and determination within households. (What the family did not mention but could be observed in the interview is that their spiritual beliefs had a role in cultivating resilience and determination)

While the story suggests that community contexts need not have a determining influence on households, it is important to note that Fletchers Land does not have the level of violence that seems to typify some other areas. The community also has vibrant citizen associations, which have proven advantageous for the family. When the story is

compared to others in this document, it becomes apparent that variations in contexts may be important for outcomes. Community members in Fletchers Land do not appear to exist within the oppressive social boundaries that some respondents describe; there is space to negotiate. The multiple interventions from varied agencies have had a role in cultivating that space.

Moderator: So tell me, Jean and Tony, what was it like growing up in your household?

Jean: In terms of what?

Moderator: How was it? Do you live with your mother? Just with your mother?

Jean: Yes

Moderator: How many children were living in the household? Three or four?

Jean: Five

Moderator: Five with one mother?

Jean: Yes

Moderator: And she had to take care of all of you?

Jean: Yes

Moderator: Did you have other support from their father?

Mom: Well, in the early years, from I they were born to maybe the first five years of the eldest one we had support from our father

Moderator: And it stopped

Mom: Yes, after we separated

Moderator: How was that? You recognized that it was your mother alone who had to support the children

Jean: I didn't really see it as a big deal because she was there, she was taking care of all of us, she was doing a good job, and it wasn't like I was missing anything

Moderator: So you didn't miss your father?

Jean: No, he was still in the community but he just didn't live with us

Moderator: So what about you Tony? How did you cope as a boy? Was it different for you?

Tony: Well, growing up that gave me a drive to want to achieve something better out of life so for my kids. I hope they come up to see a mother and a father living loving. So that was my experience.

Moderator: So was the relationship with mom and dad argumentative?

Tony: No it wasn't argumentative but it was just…there wasn't really much

Jean: It was but he was probably too young to remember

Tony: From what I can remember, there was minimum contact, like I never usually see my parents talk

Moderator: And how did that affect you not seeing them talk? Did it affect you at all?

Tony: Well, it really didn't affect me much and I don't know the reason behind it. I seem to understand it that maybe it was because of the kind of society I grew up in; I know other persons who were in the same situation

Moderator: Okay

Moderator: So you say you were never married but what was it like when you split up? Tell me also about during the union itself?

Mother: It was miserable, argumentative

Moderator: Abusive?

Mother: No it wasn't, not physically but verbally and I decided that it was better for them to grow up with one parent than to grow in a verbally abusive situation so I decided to cut off the relationship…

Moderator: To leave?

Mom: No, I didn't leave; I sent him on his way

Moderator: Did you pack his bags?

Mother: No I just asked him to pack them

Moderator: And how hard was it for you afterwards?

Mother: It was quite challenging and at times it was rough but at other times it wasn't that bad because I had my mom and she was a big support. Sometimes it was bad but most of the times we get by because of the big support from my mother.

Moderator: Is she still alive?

Mother: No she isn't

Moderator: Did she die a long time ago?

Mother: Yes, 13 years now; from 1999

Moderator: And how was it for you then?

Mother: It started to get emotionally challenging. Financially, it started to get a little harder because you know I could ask her, she worked all the time; she was always working. I think she had three jobs. When she died it was trouble financially and emotionally as well.

Moderator: Did you do have counseling at all?

Mom: No

Moderator: Okay. So who got involved with CSJP first?

Jean: It was Mom. No, it was us; it was through YOU. We got involved with YOU

Moderator: You had the mentorship?

Jean: Yes

Tony: The mentorship hadn't started as yet

Jean: No but when we heard about YOU we went to the workshop

Tony: The adolescent workshop

Jean: Yes, the adolescent workshop and when we just started we had a workshop only adults in the workshop and then we got involved in the mentorship programme and that's how we really got involved with PH because they funded YOU

Moderator: How did you find the mentorship programme?

Tony: Well, I didn't have a mentor

Moderator: You didn't have a mentor?

Tony: No

Jean: I thought it was great. I'm still in contact with my mentor and that was probably from maybe four, five years ago

Mom: From GradeTen

Jean: Yes, I was in Grade Ten from high school and we still talk

Moderator: Good, tell me about primary school, which one did you attend? Did you both attend the same primary school?

Jean: We went to the same primary school: Clan Clarthy primary

Moderator: And how was that?

Jean: It was alright

Moderator: What kind of environment was it?

Tony: Well the environment was okay; it didn't have any violence

Moderator: It was not violent

Tony: No, it wasn't a violent environment and the teaching was okay

Jean: Yes school was always a good environment, especially coming from the innercity where you see certain behaviours. I had friends there who grow

up in similar situation but we made certain bonds, certain friendship and relationships; school was just a worry free place.

Moderator: What high school did you pass for?

Tony: Well for me, Excelsior

Moderator: Oh yes

Jean: I went to Holy Childhood

Moderator: How was that?

Jean: School was okay for the 5 years. I didn't start enjoying school until 6th form. I think my last few years were the best. Again I formed some really good friendship, made some good bonds. Again school for me was a safe place, a place you wanted to go because your friends are going to be there.

Moderator: Did your school have students from all social classes?

Jean: Yes

Moderator: How did you feel when you first went? Did you feel out of place because you're from a different social class? Did they make you feel out of place?

Jean: No I never felt that way. You probably heard people talk things like it's a rich people school but the reality is not like that. Yes there are high skin coloured people who have money but then you also have people who come from the innercity like you. You make friends and you even make friends with persons who have money, people who are from the innercity like yourself, people from middle class

Mom: I think friendships were easy for her because she went there while her elder sister was going there. Her sister was in fifth form

Jean: Most of my friends were my sister's friends so the adjustment wasn't all that hard

Moderator: What about Excelsior… did you enjoy it?

Tony: Yes, high school was probably the best part of my life thus far. I am very grateful for the persons I got to meet. Excelsior was a great experience. Each year , I looked forward to something different at school. The teaching was good and the students were good; it was just fun for me

Moderator: I thought Excelsior was rough; it wasn't rough for you?

Tony: No not at all for me

Moderator: That's the reputation though, isn't it?

Tony: Yes for many persons it rough but for me, those things never normally bother me. I am not a trouble-maker

Moderator: You weren't involved in any gang

Tony: I wasn't involved in any gang but the persons who were normally associated with a gang respected me

Moderator: How is that? How did that work? Because every other story so far has been the exact opposite

Tony: I really don't know but it feels like I was an inspiration to them because I excelled in class and most of them were in class with me so they would normally look for me and ask me how you do this and I never hesitated to show them, I was always helping them

Jean: Even at home, most of the guys sitting on the corner have a certain respect for him as a youngster who was still in school and still has his head up

Moderator: How do you account for that though? You're still in school, have your head up and getting good grades. How did you motivate yourself or who motivated you?

Tony: My mother is my number one motivator

Mom: Sobbing

Moderator: (To Mother) Why you crying? (To Tony) Tell me why you think your mother and sister crying?

Tony: Well the whole experience, the journey, was an emotional one. Nothing was on the table; we had to work hard for everything we had

Moderator: Tell me about the journey

Tony: It wasn't an easy one. We had to work hard we know that in order to achieve we had to work hard we had to be successful at school. We knew what the target was and we just work hard to achieve it. We were kids but we understood the situation. We see our mother growing us in a single parent home and we know things are rough, and we said to ourselves "Mommy don't worry, things will change one day. We are going to make it out one day. We just trust in God".

Moderator: You are a very close-knit family. Are all of you close or just the three of you?

Tony: Yes, all of us

Moderator: So, is it that when you were raising them you were very honest with them? Did you say: "This is the situation; this is how it is; this is what you have to do"?

Mother: Right, right and they grow up with the sense that they have to achieve educationally. I instilled in them the moral that education is the best way to go so they know that and sometimes my daughter would remind me

and I feel a little way because she would say " Mummy, remember when you send me to school and it was pouring and nobody send their children to school that day only you alone and when I went to school I had to take off my socks and wring it out" and I say to myself if I could relive it I wouldn't send them to school in the rain

Jean: No but even though we joke about it...only six people came to school that day ...it is something to be proud of because when I look back, that was one of the points where I saw that she was really trying to instill how important education is because to send your child in a downpour to school must mean that you believe highly that education is the best way, and that is something you want to instill. She wanted us to understand that school is important; education is important no matter what: once no one comes on the news and says that school is out, you have to go. School is on, school is in session; therefore, you have to go to school. When we bring it like a joke and we tease her like how she send us to school in the pouring rain. To my 11 year old mind we didn't need to go school in the pouring rain because no teaching went on or anything like that. Even though we bring up and tease you it was a point for me where I really understood just how important education and school was. I was drenched from head to foot. I had to take off my socks and wring it out and hang it up like everyone else for it to dry so that was the point where it hit home for me that education was important.

Moderator: You grew up in Fletcher's Land though, was it violent then?

Mother: No, Fletcher's Land is never usually a violent community but you know it is an innercity community and from time to time we have flare ups but not for long. Sometimes you have one or two persons who act crazy but after a while they die

Moderator: How was it growing up in Fletcher's Land because a lot of young people don't do what you two do right? What was the influence like? What is it like now? I'm sure it has changed over the years but what was the influence around you like?

Jean: I don't know about you (Tony) but I feel as if I grew up away from all of that even though I was there. Some of the things persons my age were doing I wasn't doing that either because I wasn't allowed to or because I didn't think that way so even I was there growing up there, I feel like I was apart form all that.

Moderator: Was it like that for you too?

Tony: No, not entirely but in the last part of high school days I started socializing with some of the persons I grew up with. Yet, I was the person who would normally be the one to say that's wrong; stop that!

Moderator: And they listened to you?

Tony: Yes they often listened to me

Jean: The influence was kind of like a motivating factor because you see that in the innercity the status quo is that the young men grow up sitting on the corner smoking weed and the young girls get pregnant at 15. You see that around you and you think that's something that you don't want for yourself. You use that as something to say that's not the path you want for your life and you use that to motivate you to reach for better things for yourself.

Moderator: What age did you have your first child?

Mother: 20

Moderator: How did you shield them from Fletcher's Land but also ensure that your daughter didn't get pregnant at 20?

Jean: She was strict, very strict

Mother: What I did after I had this young man is I decided that because I used to work out---I used to work at a supermarket as a cashier mainly---but I had a talent I could do hair so I said to myself maybe it's time I get certified and start something at home so I could be there. While I earned I could be watching them as well so I went and did a certificate in cosmetology and I started something at home.

Jean: You know what I think. I think it was good parenting on her part because she was very strict. Nowadays, some parents are not very stern; they take anything from their young children. When we were young she was adamant that there was to be no boys; she didn't want to see any boys at the gate, nothing like that right. So it was like good parenting on her part because she grew up in the innercity so she knew what it was like and she knew what she didn't want for her children. In her parenting style, those were some of the things she had in the forefront of her mind.

Mother: No street, because I grew up on the street

Moderator: What do you mean when you say that you grew up on the street?

Mother: Because from I know my mother she was always working. She worked at a restaurant and a nightclub so she was gone most of the day because the restaurant opens in the day and the night club opens at night. She used to be home like three in the mornings and by 8, by she send us off to school she gone to work. So when we get home we wouldn't see her. One of my brothers was there and his girlfriend would cook but you know nobody would watch out for you and monitor you like your mother would. I had the free time to go out on the road, go to the sea-side with the boys…all of that stuff…so when I had them I decided that they would

not grow up on the street. I wouldn't say I sheltered them but they weren't allowed to be let loose on the road.

Moderator: Did you spank them?

Mother: No. I spanked my eldest daughter once and my other daughter, if she were here, she would tell you that she got spanked when she was about 5.

Moderator: Does she remember this now?

Mother: She can't forget it and every time she tells me about it I tell her sorry. But those things help me in my career as an aspiring social worker because when I talk to parents now I can definitely tell them that the things that what they do to them (children) when they are four or five they will never forget it.

Moderator: Alright. Tell me about CSJP. You (Jean) started out first and you (Tony) didn't have a mentor and you (Jean) had a mentor

Tony: Right

Jean: When we were first introduced to the YOU he was too young,

Moderator: Who introduced you?

Jean: It was you (referring to mom)

Mother: It was through the community organization. We had a community organization. At the time, it was the Fletcher's Land management committee so I think that the representatives from YOU got in touch with the chairman and he asked one of our community mobilizers to gather the children. I learnt about it because I was on the committee as well and so we tried to get the children involved. After I attended a couple of the sessions I found it was quite interesting to get somebody else away from the family who really cares to come and teach us stuff. I started going to the sessions but I realized that there was something missing from them. I was invited to an Open Day at the coast headquarters and the facilitator asked me to speak from a parent's perspective. Mr. Simmons was there; I remember he was sitting right at the front. My thinking was that they teach them mediation, respect, personal hygiene, a lot of stuff; however, I was thinking at that time that there's no way they can engage the children and not engage the parents and so my speech... and Mr. Simmons will tell you I spoke and said there's a missing link and I recommended that they also teach parenting skills because even if they do the conflict resolution component, when the children go back home they are back to square one.

Moderator: Exactly

Mother: So if they can get the parents to understand this mediation and the conflict resolution as well, it will be embedded in the children. Therefore,

when my time came to speak, I said there's a missing link and they can't engage the children without engaging the parents and CSJP started the parenting workshop

Moderator: So you influenced, that? And then?

Mother: Then CSJP started the parenting workshop in the communities. They came to Fletchers Land in 2004, in about October or late September 2004. We understood that it was going to be six weeks of parenting workshops and they would have different presenters and so we, from the community organization perspective, were asked to organize and mobilize parents to come to the workshop. The workshops were pretty interesting and I learnt a lot. The children will tell you that my parenting style changed after the workshop because I was abusive verbally; I would curse them out, especially when I didn't have anything to give them. Before I started the workshop, I didn't know I was doing so many things wrong to them. By the time the six weeks were up, they will tell you I was a proper, proper parent. After the fourth week ended, Mr. Simmons came down and he called me and another mobilizer and he asked how the workshop was going. We said we thought it was going quite well but we still didn't think that the parents we wanted---those that would benefit the most---were being reached. I think they had, on average, 30-35 parents each week and, of course, more than half the lot of parents that we would classify as good parents; parents who care for their children the right way. So we told Mr. Simmons that we were not getting those in the gutter perse and those were the ones we think we need to reach. Mr. Simmons said that we should continue through a parenting group and he would talk to the facilitators at the end of the workshop and then we would launch the Fletcher's Land Parenting Association, which we did.

Moderator: Oh brilliant, brilliant

Mother: And we are still running right now.

Moderator: Good, now apart from the parenting group and the YOU , you do even deeper into CSJP right?

Jean: Through other programmes

Moderators: Such as?

Jean: RISE and SISTREN

Moderator: And so you participated with them in what way, what did you do with RISE and what did you do with SISTREN?

Jean: At first, RISE was fairly similar to YOU but by the time RISE came on, YOU had already left so they kind of pick up the slack where YOU left off. During the life skills workshops, they encouraged us to put together a community youth group. That group, the Youth Motivators, came out of

RISE. I got employment through RISE. I worked with them for roughly a year and half as a teaching assistant because they had remedial programmes for the younger children in the community. As I was a part of the adult programme, I was recommended for a teaching assistant position with the remedial programme.

Moderator: And you?

Tony: Yes I was involved in SISTREN. They taught us life skills and drama and dance. We would work on a special piece to perform at a certain time of the year.

Moderator: Okay

Tony: It was a fun experience. We got to socialize with other communities that they also worked in…

Moderator: And what do you think the benefits were to you from those. Can you think of a direct benefit and an indirect benefit? Because some of them we already know

Tony: Well the benefits from SISTREN are that you learn life skills --- how to deal with people better --- and we actually learnt drama.

Moderator: Do you like drama?

Tony: Yes and we take all that into high school where I did drama also.

Moderator: You did drama in high school

Tony: That was very helpful to me.

Jean: The life skills part of it really helped me both with YOU and when RISE came in because they taught different things from Concept Management to STDs/STIs and they even trained you. Even though the training itself was indirectly making you a peer mentor. That was the other part of the programme that YOU started and I went back to school and I was teaching my friends about STI and like conflict management and all of that.

Moderator: So you passed that on. Tony, you are now 18, what are you doing now?

Tony: Well I finished

Moderator: Excelsior?

Tony: Yes, I did and CXC got results. I passed 7 subjects so now I'm hoping to go to 6th form September coming

Moderator: Is this at Excelsior High school?

Tony: Yes at Excelsior

Moderator: And what do you want to do at Excelsior?

TONY: Well I'm hoping to be a Math teacher

Moderator: Really

Tony: Yes, so I'm hoping to do Math in 6th form and any other thing that has to do with Math

Moderator: Just math? What happened to drama?

Tony: Well the drama is something I still have with me that I plan to teach my children

Moderator: But you don't want to make a career out of it, you didn't think about the School of Drama?

Tony: No but I still believe I could make it in the movie industry

Moderator: Your mother and sister are laughing; don't they believe you could make it in the movie industry?

Jean: No I'm laughing because I know he's really good at it

Moderator: So tell me why you won't you consider both math and drama

Tony: I have a love for math; my interest in drama is not so much

Moderator: Why do you think you have to select one or the other?

Tony: Well for me it is what I really love

Moderator: I'm just asking why you can't do both in the proportion that you love them

Mother: Okay

Tony: Why I can't do both

Moderator: Yes, but we'll talk about that later. So tell me about you (Jean). You went from Holy childhood to?

Jean: I went to 6th form and then I went to CARIMAC

Moderator: So are you doing journalism?

Jean: No graphics; visual media

Moderator: Are you enjoying it? Are you very good at it?

Jean: Yes I'm good because I have learned over the years that I've been there

Moderator: What financial support did you have? Did you get support from CSJP?

Jean: Yes. In my first year, I got a book scholarship from the PRPII programme and, in my second year, which I have just completed I got a book scholarship from CSJP. The financial support in terms of tuition is like a burden taken off my shoulders and her (mom's) shoulders so I can just focus on my work

Moderator: Did you get support during high school as well?

Jean: Yes, yes but not so much from CSJP. I remember a couple of times I got a Supreme Venture scholarship and in 6th form it was the Member of Parliament.

Moderator: So you basically got a lot of support, is that correct?

Jean: Yes

Moderator: Do you think that that has been instrumental? Its not just CSJP: You have had support from a number of programmes and a vibrant organization within your community that will tell you about what is happening. I am wondering to what extent it has been important to have all this support.

Mother: It is important because for me if I never had all of that I don't know what would have happened. For me, I remember once that I had to go Holy childhood to speak to the Guidance Counselor re my oldest daughter. I'm not sure if it's because of the way I articulated but after the conversation she said: "Have you ever thought of going back to school?" I said " All the time". She said: "I did my degree while my daughters were still in school". I said I would think about it and she said: "Think about it". But on my way home I said to myself: "How could that be?" I couldn't see myself going; it was like way off. I couldn't see how I would send myself to school and send them to school because I was already struggling to send them to school so I said it's really a nice thought but maybe after they finish. Then CSJP came along and I was able to go to school and send them to school through financial support and tuition

Moderator: CSJP offered a level of family support….so now you are able to go to UWI to do Social Work

Mother: I started with the four-month course in the principles and practices of Social Work. And I must tell you when I was doing the four-month courses I also get support from CSJP with bus fare and maybe meals. I will say bus fare really because when I got my stipend, I had to use it to pay for lunch for them but I would always have bus fare to go to school.

Moderator: So you started with the four-month course and then what happened?

Mother: The 4 month course… Before I started I always a person who was doing community work, the secretary for this club and the secretary for that club so I was saying it would be good to get formal training because I think I was already doing Social Work and I even call myself a Social Worker. When we had a lecture with Kim Hines---she was a lecturer at the Social Work Unit, but she is now lecturing at the Open Campus---she told us that we were not social workers. Many people in the class cried but I said I'm not crying I don't care what she was saying, I still think I'm a Social Worker. However, at that time she opened our eyes to the reality that you cannot call yourself a Social Worker unless you have a degree in

Social Work. I told myself that all I had to do was move forward and see how fast I could get this degree because I still called myself a Social Worker knowing that I am not a Social Worker unless I have the degree. I completed the 4 month course and applied straight away for the 1 year certificate and while I was doing the certificate I applied for the degree and was accepted. Even during the year for the social services the support from CSJP got bigger because we got a book grant .We got $15,000 to purchase texts, important texts and we were still getting stipend for bus fare and lunch. When I went over to the degree we learned that the stipend wasn't forthcoming but we still pressed on and even when I was doing the Certificate there came an opportunity for a scholarship from a George Brown colle in Canada and the Coordinator for the programme was asked to select two persons and the lecturer were asked to select two persons as well and I was selected by both and I got to do a year at George Brown college. It was very good ...

Moderator: Great...so how far are you from completing?

Mother: Well I have...let me speak....

Jean: 1 semester

Mother: Basically two semesters but for the first semester and the second semester I wouldn't have any courses to do but the project is year long. In social work you have a practicum and the third year practicum is a year long. It starts in October and finishes in April.

Moderator: And that will be done in your community?

Mother: The practicum?

Moderator: Yes

Mother: No, not necessarily. I want to do community development for the practicum but then the Social Work Unit they have the communities that they send their students but I will have to talk to them to see if I could do it in a CSJP community; that would be very good for me.

Moderator: What do you see now in terms of the future for the family, I know you cried a while ago but it is such an amazing story

Mother: I see my family progressing I think in a couple years we will not be poor anymore

Moderator: Do you see yourself as poor?

Mother: I know, yes well financially but rich spiritually and educationally we say we are rich because a lot of persons come to our house to get information from the children and information from me and the children get a lot of information from me as well. When I say poor I mean financially for me I think that's the least. I always say to myself that is the

least...when I wonder what I'm going to cook you just push that behind you. I always say to myself in the setting that I grow up in... people have three children and two will hold up their head and one would gone astray or one hold his head up and two gone astray or the three of them just don't bother and I am thinking that I am blessed because all my children hold their heads up high from my first daughter. When I am travelling in the bus and I see a young man or woman in a 6th form uniform, I think that they are brilliant, they are well bright and I want that for my children. The elder one, she left Holy Childhood and she went to St Hughs 6th form and she made a big impact especially in discipline because the discipline at both schools is different . She went down to St. Hughs and she said to me I really love Holy Childhood and now I can appreciate Holy Childhood. And this one here went to 6th form as well and the third one she is working here, she is on the internship programme. I think she's at the procurement unit up stairs

Jean: And the baby one

Mother: She went to St. Hughes High and went to 6th form at the St. Andrew Technical. She is going to Utech in September.

Moderator: Okay, that's great

And this one now a friend of mine called this morning to find out about the results and he was saying so what is he going to do now. I was saying it's a family tradition: 6th form is the next step so he wouldn't be the one not to go to 6th form

Moderator: He just has to go

Mother: He just has to go. I see that he's bright and I always think that people who go to 6th form ares bright. A lot of people don't go to 6th form; they opt for teachers college instead of 6th form. However, I think that if you go to 6th form it really says something about you

Moderator: What do you think are the gaps in the **CSJP** programme? How can it make the programme have the same impact on other families?

Mother: I think CSJP should focus more on the parenting programme because remember persons are used to a way of life and if the communities are to change it won't happen overnight; it will take years and years. You have persons that will take a while to get them to understand their roles. I think twice before I say what I have to say in terms of parenting and its contribution or lack of contribution to society but I always think that a big part of our problem stem from the lack of proper parenting. I like the scholarship programme because there are so many persons who wouldn't even dream---when I look at myself--- of going to University

and CSJP made it possible but I wish a lot of the money would be spent in the parenting.

Moderator: I understand that in terms of parenting but parents need employment opportunities. Would that make a big difference; that is skills and employment?

Mother: Right, skills and employment are very important because some people want to do the skills but at the same time they don't have any money to send their children to school so they can't focus. I have a colleague who always says to me" "I lift my hat off to you Shereen but let me tell you something I can't go to school unless I know my family is alright financially". Some people would rather be working than doing a skill. But if they could just do a skill and even do a 1 or 2 subject on the side I think they would appreciate it. But most of all unemployment is a big thing so it would be food if we could get something going in the parenting group to employ some persons as long as they are skilled.

The End

LIFE HISTORY 5

Pseudonym: Shawn

Age: 27

Community: Denham Town

Siblings: Shawn grew up with 3 brothers and 1 sister. His mother and father have two children together. His mother has had children with two other men. His father also has 4 other children with another woman. Shawn's parents are not married.

Household: Shawn lives by myself; his mother has her own house.

Education: Shawn does not know about his parent's educational achievements. As his father went to Canada since he was small, he only communicates by telephone.

Shawn states that his family is not poor since his parents were able to send him to school. His father has not contributed to his upkeep and upbringing and Shawn confirmed that he has no feelings for him. His experience with his father has motivated him to try to develop a closer relationship with his two children.

Shawn's account describes inner strength and determination. For example, he has been able to maintain a relationship with gang members while not becoming a part of the gang. Though his face is disfigured, he claims not be affected by people's opinions and he maintains his ambition despite the possibility of discrimination. Further, he is evidently able and willing to learn quickly and, with commitment, could overcome the educational disadvantage that he reported in his early years. However, Shawn does appear to require more support, particularly in negotiating relationships in ways that are not detrimental to him. At two major points of his life, he credits teachers' attitudes with preventing him from reaching targets that were within his grasp.

Despite his educational background, Shawn is capable of clearly analyzing the pernicious effects of social inequalities. The story shows the relevance of life skills training as well as psychological interventions to deal with the varieties of loss that Andres experience, whether they are acknowledged as critical (such as Shawn's stance to his father's abandonment) or not.

Moderator: You say your father went away when you were small

Shawn: Yes

Moderator: How did you feel about that growing up?

Shawn: I didn't feel any way

Moderator: Did you have any man growing up in the house with you? Did you have any male figure to help you?

Shawn: It was just my brothers who were older than me

Moderator: Oh was he like a father to you or not really

Shawn: Yes

Moderator: Let me ask you about your family though…how did you feel as a youngster growing up? Tell about you when you were little

Shawn: Well I was not thinking of a father, because my mother was always there, but before he went away he always had it. It was just a normal life…right from wrong. During school days, I gave trouble so it was just like that

Moderator: Did you enjoy it growing up in Denham town?

Shawn: Yes

Moderator: Tell me about Denham town. What did you like about the community?

Shawn: I liked everything about the community. There was violence but I have lived all my life at Denham town. Sometimes, I have bad influence around me; however, my mother always keeps me away from bad company so if she saw me going out of the way, she would stop me. Even if my big sister told me to do something, I would do it. I was growing my hair and she told me to cut it because the police will harass me and so I cut my hair even though I am an adult. The last time I got my father's number to speak to him, I told him that he is a grandfather and he doesn't even know. He then said something that I did not like. I told him that right now it is only my mother and sister that's my mother and father and so I don't call him again

Moderator: Don't you have any feelings for him?

Shawn: No

Moderator: You don't love him or hate him?

Shawn: No, I don't love him and I don't hate him. I just know that he is my father and that's it, so even if he passes away I will not feel any way because he wasn't there. I already know that my mother and my sister that were always my mother and father even though they can't. I don't miss him either

Moderator: What primary school did you attend?

Shawn: I attended Operation Friendship basic school then Denham Town primary school and then Tivoli Gardens High school

Moderator: Do you have any subjects?

Shawn: No, well at the time I was to dot CXCs I was accidently burnt. I used to do Type Writing, Math, Social Studies and stuff but I ended up in the hospital and then came out but I never got the chance to study enough to pass. I used to do Human and Social Biology but the teacher told me I would not pass because I was not ready for it. With respect to the typewriting teacher, when I came out of the hospital I went to class and by the time I reached the door she asked for me and somebody told her what happened to me and she made a bad remark.

Moderator: What was the remark? Do you remember?

Shawn: She said something like "he should have died" and so since she made the remark I didn't return to class; I just turned back. It was a teacher who made that comment. Since 2010, I was supposed to do 5 CXCs but then the incursion happened. I had actually started. I did the physical education, I did half of that but during that period the incursion happened so I didn't get a chance to complete it.

Moderator: So in a sense then you are telling me that financially you wouldn't consider yourself poor then …

Shawn: No

Moderator: Alright, so when you went to school you experienced disadvantage form the teacher; is that what you're saying?

Shawn: Just one teacher

Moderator: And that caused you to

Shawn: Slack off

Moderator: Did you redo her class?

Shawn: Yes, and ended up in the hospital

Moderator: And the second chance afterward?

Shawn: The second chance was in 2010, but the violence, the incursion that happened in West Kingston caused me to leave my community and go to Wolmers

Moderator: And you haven't tried to do them over since then

Shawn: I ended up going to CSJP. I finished it; got a level 1 and graduated most outstanding student

Moderator: What course did you do?

Shawn: Clothing. I find myself just happy

Moderator: Are you happy?

Shawn: Yes, I love being me and not trying to be something else. The Ministry of Health awarded me most outstanding peer educator because I used to come in the community and try to help young people to know their status in AIDS and I got a certificate in that. I have never dropped out of any school. I finished all my schooling. One thing that would have made me unhappy growing up is if when I was graduating my mother didn't show up at the graduation but she showed up.

Moderator: But you say you haven't graduated with subjects

Shawn: No. I did a six -month course with JDF and everybody called me hustler

Moderator: What did you hustle?

Shawn: I used to buy clothes and sell, buy and sell. Then I sent a resume to somebody in Canada and I haven't gotten a call as yet or an email. Jobs are limited; jobs are hard to get but from you grow up in the inner-city you know how to survive, I won't do anything illegal or whatsoever. I only smoke ganga now and then but I used to smoke weed. When I was going to school, I used to play hockey. I really would love to get a job because I have two sons.

Moderator: Really. Are they twins?

Shawn: No, I got the stipend on Friday and it is already finished because I have to buy things for them to go to school

Moderator: Do you have to provide for your family or does your wife/girlfriend help? Are you married?

Shawn: No

Moderator: Does she help?

Shawn: My girlfriend,

Moderator: Yes

Shawn: Right now my girlfriend lives in the United States

Moderator: Is this the girlfriend that you have the children with?

Shawn: No we broke up a long time ago

Moderator: Oh the one you have the children with

Shawn: I have to do that for my children because I don't want them to grow up and have no feelings for me in the same way that I don't have any feelings for my father

Moderator: Have you ever been involved in a gang?

Shawn: No

Moderator: Are you sure?

Shawn: Everybody knows (Name excluded) that and he and I used to go to school together, even though he is now seen as a bad man or whatsoever. Many times, I would just hail them (gang members) and go through or sometimes I would sit down and reason with them, tell them to go back to school... but they have to make their own decisions as I made my own decisions: I chose what I want from what I did not want.

Moderator: Do you have a lot of friends?

Shawn: Not to go into gang. It's not what they decide is what I decide

Moderator: And how do you feel about gangs?

Shawn: In my view it makes no sense. At the end of the day, it makes no sense for you to want to kill a man or for you rob someone of what they worked hard for. I go out there and try and make two ends meet and you can do it too. That is not necessary; it makes no sense. However, not because they are in a gang it means that I can't talk to them or whatever because they are my friends

Moderator: Are you not afraid of the police (response) because you talk to them?

Shawn: If I'm afraid of the police?

Moderate: No… you say you talk to them regardless of whether they are in a gang or not and so I am wondering if you aren't you afraid that people will associate you with them.

Shawn: No, if police comes and sees me with them or whatsoever, the only thing he has to do when he carries you to the station is if he finds anything on you, then he can charge you and if he can't prove you guilty then he should let you go. In our community, the policemen deal with people badly. They deal with people as though they have no rights or whatsoever. On Thursday, they had a curfew and I was at JDF. When I got home my friends said that the police cut off my lock go into my house and when I went in there everything was stirred up. I went down to mother's house and it appeared as though they were trying to use a crowbar to remove the grill

Moderator: What were they looking for?

Shawn: No, it's a curfew and they search house to house. So I went down to the police station (although I was supposed to go back). I went to make them know that I didn't give them permission to go into my house without a search warrant because I know my rights and law and things. I was supposed to go back there to see the Superintendent but I didn't get to go back

Moderator: Okay, so what kind of work are you doing at the JDF?

Shawn: Well basically the skill areas we have you find some of it available and some are not available. I do welding and welding is not available so they taught me how to lay blocks. They also taught different skills such as carpenter work and those things. Eventually, I got to love do mason work although I already have skills in welding. Nothing is wrong if I also develop skills in masonry and construction; nothing is wrong with that. I also used to do electrical work with an electrical company

Moderator: After the JDF, what are you going to do?

Shawn: Well after the JDF I will try and check back with the company that I worked with to do the electrical work or I will send my resume to Tankweld in order to seek a job.

Moderator: Tell me how you heard about CSJP

SHAWN: They came into the community. It was some youths that I heard talking

about it and so I went and listen to what they had to say and I fill out the form. They called us to do a test and I did the test and it just went that way.

Moderator: Are you on the vocational training programme? Is that at the JDF?

Shawn: No (Respondent did not appear to understand the term vocational)

Moderator: How did CSJP support you?

Shawn: Well they provide us with food and everything

Moderator: They provide your needs

Shawn: Yes

Moderator: What influence has CSJP had on your life?

Shawn: Well it did a lot because I wanted something out of life and CSJP gave me the opportunity to do that. I met new people since I have been in the CSJP I meet people from rival communities and we get along good because CSJP teaches us that unity is strength. When you check it out, when all of us from rival communities come together and we say that we are going to do something we do it and that's just it so we realize that unity is strength and CSJP is doing a good thing

Moderator: And so CSJP helps with making peace because it causes you to associate across barriers?

Shawn: Yes

Moderator: Are there any downsides to the programme? Is there anything that they should be doing better or doing more of?

Shawn: Well I am satisfied with what they are doing even though I hear people saying that the stipend should have been better because they are working hard but to me anything I get I will take it because at the end of the day if I were at home nobody would give me that kind of money you understand and plus I have kids that I am to take care of so I just do it

Moderator: Is there any way that you would make the program better?

Shawn: Me?

Moderator: Yes

Shawn: If I can make it better?

Moderator: Not you personally. Are there ways in which CSJP can make things better. What would you suggest?

Shawn: Well I wasn't thinking of that because what they are doing is enough for me. I don't know of other people's views on them but what they are doing is enough for me.

Moderator: You mean because of the JDF experience?

Shawn: Yes, we had a meeting yesterday and in the meeting they said that some of the people can get JDF employment and that they are going to go around to some of the companies and see if some of them can employ some of us. I am glad for that opportunity because the JDF programme eases a stress off of me. If the six months are up and they just put me back out its going to be hard for me to go to certain companies and try get a job because of the community that I come from (*Note that persons from garrison communities often complain about being discriminated against because of their places of residence*). So they say that when you're finished the six months you're going to get a certificate from JDF and they are going to try and go around. I can even go home and a try do my little hustling in the same way and they can call and say I can go to XYZ and get a job but in the meantime I am still going to put out applications and those things

Moderator: Alright, we talked about the family and we talked about the community. Do you think that the government is providing a lot of opportunity for young people like yourself?

Shawn: Well right now they say that the CSJP is a part of the government but apart from this they should have had more jobs in the country. This is the first program I see that has come this far. CSJP clashes with HEART but CSJP starts from the root of the thing. If you want crime to stop or low crime rates you have to have more employment so CSJP comes in and gives you six months and brighten up your future with a certificate in which you know that you can apply for a job. If the government had more work out there, you would have less crime

Moderator: What about the society and the division in society: Did it affect you in your childhood?

Shawn: Like where I come from?

Moderator: Yes, I mean relations across wealthy or poor classes…do you think that these have affected your chances in life?

Shawn: Yes, those things happen

Moderator: But do you think very much of these matters?

Shawn: It's not just happening now. It has been happening for a long time as they say the rich people get more opportunity than the lower class in life. When my sister was growing up, she used attend Meadowbrook High school and when she was applying, my mother had to give them an incorrect address or else she would not get in. Even the other day I heard on a program that certain people from the inner city if they do GSAT or Common Entrance to go to Immaculate or one of those top high schools, somebody with lower grades from places such as Cherry Gardens would get the preference. That basically helps to break down the country so at the end of the day if I qualify to go to Campion college and they don't take me at Campion college and my average is higher than a youth from Cherry Gardens and they send me to Denham town or Tivoli, it looks like I am nothing. These things break us down. When you're supposed to be up there they bring you down

Moderator: Have you ever felt pushed down?

Shawn: Not really

Moderator: Not really?

Shawn: Not really…well probably because I have a burn in my face people may look at me strangely but I know I wasn't born this way and if people want to talk, they can just talk because its not going to hurt me. I just know what I want out of life and I know what to go towards

Moderator: You do seem very strong internally and appear to be moving towards your goal, am I right?

Shawn: Yes.

Moderator: Do you know any other program, away from the CSJP, that can help you?

Shawn: No

Moderator: You know CSJP only. (Recording jumps)

Shawn: When I was just started going to the school I did not know anything about welding. I didn't know how to gauge a plant or to put a rod into it. I went there and I learnt and eventually I ended up loving it and teaching

everyone in my class. Sometimes the teacher told me that I already know it and so I should teach the others. I always told them that I want to go to UTech and get a degree in order to become an Engineer.

Moderator: But why did you stop?

Shawn: It was a teacher again that stop me from doing that. It's like each time I go to class...nobody is too big to learn and because he is the teacher I think he thinks he knows everything.; however, no one knows everything. He was teaching Technical Drawing (TD) at the time. I am doing Level Two now. This happened during that time. I would have been doing Level Three now. I only did eight assessments and passed all of them. I had six to do and he did not let me finish the others. He and I got into an argument because he told us that we should use the protractor to draw a box. I said "Sir, this is TD, we can't use the protractor to draw a box; the protractor is used to dissect angles". He said that I know too much and then I said its true. I have a teacher friend that teaches TD at Tivoli High school I asked him and he said I was correct. I ask another welding teacher on the compound and he said that I was correct. On the day of the assessment, when I was doing the first assignment, the Assessor came. He told us that he works in China and other places. I said to him "Sir, you don't you use a projector to draw a box, you use it to dissect angles". I did this in front of the teacher and the class. He said I was correct. From then on so the teacher started to 'show me bad vibes'.

One morning I came and...well I would say that I came five minutes late but sometimes you can be late because anything can happen. When I got to the main gate, the teacher was fixing the main gate but the students were outside in the yard doing nothing. I came through the gate and said "Good Morning". He just look at me and said "Go home". He said it was because of how I was wearing my uniform. I am aware that they have a policy about how the uniform should be worn and so I looked down to make sure that I had on my proper gears: my hard boot, my black pants and my shirt tucked in and I had on my hat and my teen square so I said "Sir, go home for what?" There were some other teachers standing by and looking so I said again: "Go home for what". He said: "Go home!" Ms Adams had told me that even if you're late, they are not supposed to send you home. It is better that they mark you absent for the day and you do not receive a stipend for that day but you shouldn't be sent home. Anyway he made a huge deal out of it and so the man who was is in charge of the school compound said that he did not want me to return. I think that each time works come to the school, it is that teacher who does it so I figure that he prefers that I go rather than the teacher since the teacher is doing his work. This is how and why I stopped. The first eight assessments that I did he did not teaching me well. I got notes from friends but he had

two students that he had under his wings. I did all eight assessments. I had a problem with my gallstones in my kidney and I was admitted to hospital. I didn't know that I had passed all eight on the first attempt. When I came out of hospital, my friends told me that I passed. They told me that the teacher told them that they are copying my behaviour but I have passed and they had to do re-sits. I asked about the students who were being treated with favouritism and they said that those students had to do four or five resists. However, because of my relations with him, I stopped attending that school.

The End

LIFE STORY 6

Pseudonym: Andre

Community: Maxfield, Rome

Age: 26

Sex: Male

Siblings: Andre has 5 sisters and 5 brothers; 9 children belong to both his mother and father while one belongs to his father only.

Household: Andre lives with his mother in the same yard. His father has lived abroad for the last Father 10-13 years. His parents were never married. The family lives in house that has three rooms. Five of them live in two rooms while Andre lives with his 'baby mother' in his own room.

Education: Andre does not know about his parents' education background and status. He notes, though, that all his siblings finished school; he is the only one among them who has not completed secondary level.

Like many young persons in the innercities, Andre was abandoned by his father at an early age. He notes that his grandmother contributed the most to his upbringing while his mother continued to have children. Andre's uncles also encouraged him; however, these relationships suffered when they migrated.

As is common within some communities and homes, Andre is aware of obeah and believes that this has been used against him to deter his athletic potential. Indeed, his grandmother, who he describes as an 'expert in obeah', has 'helped him' to identify how he is being harmed and who has caused his stagnation. As in common, too, where these belief systems exist, Andre is fearful of the persons around him. He cites the bad vibes in his community for his lack of accomplishment in many areas.

These confining beliefs systems are reinforced by other modes of imprisonment. Violence, for example, has prevented Andre from attending school, although he acknowledges that education was not then a priority. Andre was also a gang member and although he is trying to remove himself from that history, he recognizes that retribution is possible, both for his offenses as well as those committed by his former colleagues. This reality supplies a further level of fear and entrapment. In addition, Andre regularly uses and abuses illegal drugs. As with many young persons, he does not appear to recognize the costs. Conversely, for him: Smoking helps calm your nerves and helps you deal with the situation in the ghetto (described as 'frassness').

Andre is grateful for the opportunities that CSJP has provided for these have begun to challenge his thoughts about himself and his potential. However, his fears have prevented him from completing the course, even at the most rudimentary level.

The challenge to CSJP is how to grapple with the ingrained belief systems that have twisted Andre's perception of himself. Andre suggests that a more effective intervention would also work within the community, principally addressing some less tangible but constraining issues, such as envy and repression of all who appear progressive.

Trapped with the material/tangible confines of violence and poverty as the less material factors, such as belief systems, Andre is begging for a chance at earning an income, even if this requires janitorial work. Confused and dejected, Andre says he sometimes feels like killing both himself and everyone around him. He credit CSJP staff with being the sole calming influence

Moderator: So you were saying a while ago that you were the only one who did not make it through primary school?

Andre: High School

Moderator: Oh, High School. So you went to primary school?

Andre: All Age

Moderator: And you went up to what grade?

Andre: Up to 9th grade

Moderator: What exams did you do in 9th grade?

Andre: The 9th grade achievement test

Moderator: And you passed those exams?

Andre: No I never passed

Moderator: Why do you think you didn't pass?

Andre: You know, in those times there was gang warfare up at the school and a child got shot so I stopped going to school. I did not know about it and I did not know him. The incident happened when it was nearly time to graduate. The incident resulted in major upheavals, which caused my friends to stop going and so I did too.

Moderator: You stopped going to school?

Andre: Yes. And I had no one to encourage me because I was a talented runner. I ran for the school and I was captain for the relay team and I used to do the 100 and 400 meters as well.

Moderator: That's great! And then you had to stop?

Andre: Yes, all of a sudden. I won't lie… the community I was raised in does a lot to bring you down. My grandmother was very spiritual and she was an expert in obeah and so we wondered if it was the community. For example, in Grade 6 when it was my turn to run, my feet suddenly became swollen and I could not run. I was in the habit of visiting a friend's home and my grandmother concluded that that was where I had come in contact with certain harmful elements. So those were the things that hindered me and I never had anyone to encourage me. Probably if I had someone like that, I would have pursued track more seriously

Moderator: Do you feel that there is a lot of obeah in your community?

Andre: Yes

Moderator: And do you feel that community members were envious of you?

Andre: Yes, that is what I am saying. There is another person who I used to train with and he is presently serving a 40-year prison term. We both were supposed to travel abroad to attend track meets and I used to go to his house. My grandmother, who is an expert in spiritual things, would tell me that my love for the company of friends led me to be harmed by obeah. We concluded that my friends' mother observed that the coach favoured me over her son because I was awarded the captainship of the relay team and envy set in form there. Eventually, many people came to share that opinion. I believe retribution has come back to those who tried to hurt me. The swelling of my feet prevented me from accessing a visa.

Moderator: So after you stopped going to school what did you do?

Andre: I just stayed home

Moderator: Just stayed home? Were you in a gang at all?

Andre: Yes I was

Moderator: Are you still in one?

Andre: Well, let me tell you about the experience and it really demonstrates God's love for me. So here I was in a gang, and all my friends were killed and I ended up going to jail. While there, I was mistaken for

another gang member and was even beaten in place of him but according to the code of the gang I could not reveal the identity of my fellow member. By the time I was released from jail all of them were dead and I came from prison and attended several funerals.

Moderator: Were they killed?

Andre: Yes, all of them were dead and I attended the funerals.

Moderator: How long were you in jail?

Andre: About four months. After which I ended up going to the country to avoid the heated gang warfare.

Moderator: They may have come after you

Andre: Yes, certainly. So after a while I came back to Kingston and changed my life and enrolled in Operation Friendship and they did a lot for me. They came into the community and taught us and showed us how to love; Ms. Adams was a good person to me. But again, the community did not provide motivation. It was not a place where people looked out for each other so that at the end of the day we all have a trade. It was more a place, which encouraged things like bleaching (whitening of the skin) and holding guns, then condemned you when you followed the example set.

Moderator: Is it the whole of Maxfield that was like that or just around your area?

Andre: The entire Maxfield was like that. Even in recent times, unrest was nearly sparked between Maxfield and another area.

Moderator: So you came back to Kingston and how did you manage to turn your life around?

Andre: Well when I came back, I didn't get back into the system. I began to stay home more and by myself until people thought that I was 'getting soft' but I had to 'play fool to ketch wise' as they say and allow people to say what they will. I got introduced to Operation Friendship and started going.

Moderator: Who told you about it?

Andre: The same people form CSJP came into the community and informed us. In the first instance, my name was not even on the list but I was assertive and got myself in

Moderator: So you took initiative?

Andre: Yes and that's when I met Ms. Adams. She saw that I was interested. She gave me a piece of paper to read from and when I did, she decided to try with me.

Moderator: So tell me what Operation Friendship did for you? How did it change you?

Andre: Yes it changed my life because in those times I started to enjoy welding and it made me feel like a 'working man' but again, the same community caused me to break down.

Moderator: Even though you were going to Operation Friendship, you are saying that the community was still breaking you down?

Andre: Yes, that's what I am telling you because even your friends can get corrupt and envy you because Operation Friendship is located in an area that was at war with my area so they would begin to wonder what is the real purpose for you going down there. So if everyone else stops attending and I want to continue they would not look at it as a positive move on my part; they would conclude that I am friends with the rival gang members. So while I wanted to continue going to Operation Friendship, I did not want the guys from my area to make that negative conclusion. It's the community; it doesn't influence the younger ones positively.

Moderator: Therefore, because you fear how they were going to feel you stopped going to Operation Friendship?

Andre: Yes

Moderator: So you are not going now?

Andre: No, I have stopped going and so I did not get the Level 1 certificate. Everyone basically stopped going, with the exception of one person. He kept going because his father raised him in a strict manner not to mix with other people so he was less influenced. His father was a warder. It was harder for me because I was already caught up in the gang.

Moderator: Let me ask you. How did you get involved with the gang and why? What did the gang do for you? Or what did you do for the gang?

Andre: Well it's just a system in the community and the system pushes you to do certain things and the same people around you will think that you are too soft or you are a fool if you deal with them honourably. So it's just the system and no one is there to guide you. As I told you, I dropped out of school and began to smoke weed with some older

boys. So I turned to them and, as expected, they could not influence me positively because they too dropped out of school. So that's just how the ghetto is; it's hard.

Moderator: So its now hard to come out of it?

Andre: I tell you something right now; I have changed my life and I am not involved in any gang activity. I still have to look out for the unexpected though.

Moderator: Can they still come after you?

Andre: Yeah anybody you know

Moderator: For what purpose?

Andre: Well a lot of things…things my now deceased friends did or even things I did.

Moderator: Oh I see. So what do you do for a living now? If you no longer attend Operation Friendship, do you just hustle?

Andre: Yes, I work on a construction site most times. But right now I am not doing anything. I have two daughters and it is hard but I am determined not to rob anyone. I get by though. I don't know how sometimes but I manage to get by.

Moderator: You used to rob before?

Andre: Yes. I won't lie, I used to rob people but I no longer want to do those things.

Moderator: Why did you decide not to do it anymore? Do you think its wrong?

Andre: Yeah

Moderator: You used to break houses and so?

Andre: I only did that once but I mostly held people up and robbed them.

Moderator: You would rather stick people up rather than break into a house. Why?

Andre: Well, breaking into a house in the same community where you live is like being a petty thief. I want to tell you the truth: once I broke into a house with two other men and stole a TV set. The police came to my house and nearly killed me

Moderator: Did the man get his TV back?

Andre: No, he didn't get it back

Moderator: So I am wondering what can be done because you said that you are just hustling and is it easy to go back into gang life since you're a hustler

Andre: Yes it is easy but I don't feel that way because it's just two results death or prison and Jah has saved me for a purpose. I have seen many friends die and I am still here and I lived to produce two daughters one: 6 years old and the other 3. So I have to try hard so that I don't return to certain things.

Moderator: How can CSJP help? Because you're not going to Operation Friendship, do you need anything else from CSJP?

Andre: No I am not doing anything right now.

Moderator: What do you think they can do?

Andre: What CSJP can do?

Moderator: Did you do the Life Skills component?

Andre: Yes I did

Moderator: And that helped?

Andre: Yeah man and I did well. They rated me highly

Moderator: Is there anything you think they could have done better?

Andre: Ok I'll tell you the truth; they have done all they could have done. There is nothing more that they could have done. So I blame the community not CSJP. They came into the community and tried to help the youth.

Moderator: But I think you need more community....let's see, now suppose the work included community people where CSJP encouraged them see things differently. Would that help too?

Andre: Yeah, yeah that's where I was heading too. They need to start coming into the community more and come sit down with the youth and talk and keep more a of presence in the place. The younger youth should be the focus. Despite the resistance, still go to them and talk so that they can understand and take heed. They can start coming into the community more and trying to influence them. Those who have already passed welding, for example, should come back and tell their

life story. I know a lot of them like Jones etc who have been through our life and know what it is

Moderator: Do you think you suffered because your father left?

Andre: Yes man because my father did not support me. My uncles supported me but they now live abroad. One of them, especially, encouraged me to work on my running (sprinting) but then he migrated. If he were here maybe I would have gotten an athletic scholarship. But he went away and did not return until after some 14 years. I have another uncle who is an architect, but you know they have their own children although they still did what they can do. If my father were there I would have a male role model because my uncles really did not live around me.

Moderator: And your mother took care of you by herself?

Andre: I was really taken care of by my grandmother. My mother was out there having more babies. My mother came around only at the last minute when my grandmother got sick then my mother came around.

Moderator: Does your mother work?

Andre: Yes she works now

Moderator: What type of work does she do?

Andre: She works at the coffee board.

Moderator: Alright, so your mother never really took care of you, neither did your father; it was your grandmother…

Andre: And my uncle

Moderator: So what do you feel about yourself now and your future?

Andre: Future? I just want another chance because I have a lot of potential. I would love to go back into CSJP and complete Level 2. And I know that I can do it because my father and uncle are welders so I have a strong memory of how to weld. I just like welding

Moderator: So you want to go back to CSJP?

Andre: Yes I would love to be given another chance.

Moderator: Because now you have baby and baby mother to take care of. Does she work?

Andre: Yes she was working at the Coffee Board but she is not working now……side chatter about him having to leave early etc……so as I was telling you, CSJP is a good thing. It has helped a lot of people and also myself but again it's the community. Every community is different; it's like 7 brothers 7 different minds. Certain communities want to see things happen for the youth and with others because they didn't get certain opportunity they want things to remain that way

Moderator: About the obeah, a lot of people tell me that obeah is prevalent.

Andre: Yes, as I was telling you, I don't even want to believe in it but things happen and you have to wonder whether someone is 'trying after you'. I don't want to believe in it because I see my grandmother pray everyday

Moderator: Yes I know that but a lot of young people tell me that there is a lot of evil in their community and that in itself hold them back.

Andre: Yes because when you start to believe these things it messes you up and that is what I am running from.

Moderator: Do they have an obeah man or woman in the area that people can go to?

Andre: No, no

Moderator: Do you have to go out?

Andre: Yes they have to go out but there are also people who buy various things and work it themselves.

Moderator: It is really common now. Do you have friends in the area?

Andre: Yea man, I have friends

Moderator: Members of gangs?

Andre: Yes, most of them are gang members but they are changing their lives because recently they went to do the test at CSJP and they are awaiting the call. This is a different set from the ones I went with.

Moderator: So most of you don't finish your primary school; therefore, you have an education gap

Andre: Yes

Moderator: Do you feel that it's hard to fill this gap? If you had some good education programmes, not just in welding now but other good education programmes, do you think you could fill the gap?

Andre: Yes man, easily. As I told you I am able to read so its just the push that I need

Moderator: Do you think that the problem is education?

Andre: Yes

Moderator: When you were going to school, did they understand your situation? Because so many young people fail I am just wondering if the teachers understand and know how to teach you?

Andre: Well, in my time, teachers never put in much effort; they would just write on the board and leave. This is because back in my time the children were not well behaved. You had teachers who would push you but when they saw that you were not well behaved they would just give up on you. Then you had some teachers that push you no matter what you did. They would use the sticks and their belt, anything at all and I saw a lot of my friends continue to do well because there were teachers who dealt with them in a strict manner while other teachers would leave you alone having deemed you unmotivated. So the teachers need to be stricter and don't give up no matter what.

Moderator: Let me ask you a question. You might not answer but do you smoke?

Andre: Yes

Moderator: Do you smoke weed?

Andre: Yes

Moderator: Grabba?

Andre: Yes

Moderator: Do you smoke anything else?

Andre: No

Moderator: Do you drink?

Andre: Yes man

Moderator: Like what?

Andre: Like Guinness and Rumbar and those things

Moderator: Do you drink everyday?

Andre: No man

Moderator: Do you feel that smoking helps you?

Andre: Smoking helps calm your nerves and helps you deal with the situation in the ghetto (described as 'frassness')

Moderator: Tell me about the 'frassness'?

Andre: Well its when you get up in the morning and you can't afford to buy anything to eat, you can't afford anything at all. So when you smoke a spliff it eases the pressure even if you're still hungry.

Moderator: Do you smoke every day?

Andre: No I don't smoke every day.

Moderator: Can you stop if you want to?

Andre: Yes it's all in the mind. For example my brother did something for me and I stopped smoking for 3 months. So it's all in the mind if you make up your mind not to smoke you can stop.

Moderator: So now you are in Maxfield and you are not educated. You didn't finish your Level 1. Do you feel that you have options?

Andre: Right now I feel like a dog without a bone.

Moderator: How do you live? You sell things or what?

Andre: That's what I am saying; sometimes I don't know it's just the mercy of God

Moderator: Do you beg?

Andre: I have couple people I can ask but it's not like I can get up and beg people I don't know. I have friends that hustle and sell juice for example, and I can ask them. I try to be progressive but then the same community brings you down.....Recently I acquired some money to set up a stall to sell oranges and banana but men from my community stabbed a man nearby and how I got caught in it is that I came out one late night to buy a cigarette and I saw the group of guys who would eventually do the stabbing. I asked them what they were up to but they didn't answer so I went my way to buy my cigarette. The person they stabbed was the brother of a policeman and they told a lie that I

was leading them to perform the crime because I had been seen in the area but it was a cigarette I had gone to buy. I thus had to stop selling my orange and banana so by that I am trying to show you how the place operates.

Moderator: Is it like you have to start over?

Andre: Yes that's what I am trying to show you. I would have to leave Maxfield to a different area where no one knows me. I would like to do my selling but I don't want to be out there and a car pulls up.....because every morning I used to be out there at 6 o' clock with my banana etc but because of the stabbing incident I had to stop selling because I sold my goods near to where the incident happened. The man's police brother locked me up and took me to Hunts Bay and took away my belongings, such as my touch screen phone, my chain everything. From then I have just kept a low profile. Even if I am at home a feel for a smoke, I don't go out to get it that's why I know it's your mind.

Moderator: How do you get food to your children?

Andre: Well, that is the thing now, I don't know, it's just God that takes me through. Sometimes I am limited to buying 2 or 3 bag juice and a biscuit and I just have to keep faith

Moderator: Is that what you feed them?

Andre: Yes because that is all I can afford. Sometimes I don't eat I just give to them and be hungry

Moderator: So what can CSJP do? Your situation is difficult.

Andre: That's right

Moderator: Do you want a job?

Andre: Yeah! A little janitorial job; anything at all. I would also love to go back to the school because I would like to get the trade. Otherwise I still have to try to finance my children because they are in school.

Moderator: And then you go back to school?

Andre: Yes, then I could afford to go back to school. As I told you even janitorial work.

Moderator: Ok

Andre: Recently, I did a test up at Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and I passed and I didn't even tell anyone about it. They then told me to bring in my food handlers permit, which I did and they never called me back. I was however, associating with this one man and he on a mental level (fret down) prevented my success

Moderator: What you mean by 'fret down'?

Andre: They have their minds focused on you and it helps to bring you down.

Moderator: So both the elders and young people are involved in this?

Andre: Yes it's just the community. If someone even gets a job he can't keep it over 3 months. I would like to keep ahead of them though because I still want a job no matter what their views are. Remember I have my kids to take care of. But its real tough I won't lie, sometime I feel like I would hang myself.

Moderator: Do you feel as though you would kill yourself?

Andre: Yes, aren't you hearing me. I just feel tired at times, fed up like I would just starting killing people until I die. Remember I told you that weed is a thing that calms you so when I get a spliff and I reflect on my little daughter I come to my senses.

Moderator: Have you ever killed anybody?

Andre: eh?

Moderator: You can't tell me that right?

Andre: No

Moderator: Everyone says no ...

Andre: No I have never done that. Who is going to hear this recording... Is it the bigger heads?

(Muffled)

Moderator: Right because you said that sometimes you just feel to kill people, you get that frustrated?

Andre: Yeah this is how the system makes me feel

Moderator: And you just feel like killing anybody?

Andre: Yeah man anybody at all because of how the system treats me. It's like I focus on hurting everyone

Moderator: But what would be the point of killing everybody? Even those who have not interfered with you?

Andre: Well I am not saying that I would do it but I am just trying to tell you how much I like CSJP. The other day I felt well frustrated and I got here at about 9am because I am interested in progress and I know that CSJP would not be to blame it would have to be the individual who is at fault they are a real good place.

Moderator: Tell me about the personal touch. People have been telling me that they take a personal interest not only in the programmes themselves but the way they talk to you. How do they talk to you? Like Ms. Adams

Andre: She talks to me like I am her brother until there came a point where I had to wonder if she 'liked' me. I tell you no lies. I even said to all of them "Adams likes me you know". She even gave me her number but I realize that ...

Moderator: That's her style?

Andre: Yes her style to interest you in joining the programme. She comes around and talks to you so right away you become more alert to what the programmme has to offer. I like her style very very much. We need many more like her and Mr. Simmons. They are influential.

Moderator: They take a personal interest

Andre: You know people who just work and collect money they show a whole heap of interest

Moderator: How do you see them? Are they like family members?

Andre: Yes, like family members like a mother to a son and a father to a son.

Moderator: Well it can't be like a mother because you said you thought she liked you (laughter)

Andre: Well it's just because of how she handles herself. She even took me to church with her. Out of all of us (in Rome) she chose to bring me to church

Moderator: (laughter)

Andre: Ms. Adams just wanted to see something good come out of me

Moderator: How was church for you? When she took you to church did that help?

Andre: It helped yes such that I even joined another church but the community got in the way there again.

Moderator: Sometimes I wonder if you worry too much about the community?

Andre: Because they are going to say….

Moderator: Why are you so worried if they say that?

Andre: That is breaking me down because when I should be worried about myself I am worried about the community. Yes, so that helps to hinder me

Moderator: Yes

Andre: Because by now I should be baptized and be living better. I saw a friend recently who delivers food and he brought me into the church and I was attending regularly but I allowed the community to rule me as I was worried that my friend would say I have become soft in my neat church clothes

Moderator: So you were worried about your image?

Andre: Yes if I had somewhere else to go, I would go there and start fresh from scratch

Moderator: But what would it take? Because it almost seems like a lack of confidence in yourself that causes you to be so concerned about what the community says

Andre: Yes, that's how I am and it is breaking me down.

Moderator: People can affect you but it's how you take it on

Andre: yeah

Moderator: So what do you think we need to work on now? If CSJP were to have an individual programme for you they would need to work on your self- confidence and your image and what else?

Andre: What else?

Moderator: Does the life skills component address self -confidence?

Andre: Yes a lot of it

Moderator: Was the life skills part too short?

Andre: No man I got a lot of good teaching

Moderator: But what I am saying is did it finish too quickly? Could you have done with more of it?

Andre: Yes, I could have done with more of it.

Moderator: Have you ever had a mentor: someone to guide you? Would that help?

Andre: Yes as I was saying I feel that if I even had my uncle around me or my father around me more and push me my life wouldn't be this way

Moderator: So when did your grandmother die? Was it a long time ago?

Andre: Yes it's been a long time. I can't remember the year.

Moderator: Was that hard?

Andre: Yes man because she used to care for me and wash my clothes, even when I was an adult. She was like a mother and a father. So when she died it was a hard jerk. Further, my uncle used to make an effort because he was an architect but when she died he migrated

Moderator: So you were left alone?

Andre: And that's how I got caught up I a gang. I had to start robbing for myself because there were no hand-outs.

Moderator: Therefore, you had to rob

Andre: Yeah because I was working and no one would sit and die of hunger.

Moderator: Let me ask you: Do you trust anyone?

Andre: Yes I have good friend in Rome but as I have told you these last days you have to just live and treat people the same way they treat you. I have friend who I trust with my life but you still have to be on the look out anyway

Moderator: Are you afraid for your life?

Andre: No

Moderator: Were you afraid before?

Andre: Given how many friends I have lost, death is nothing to me

Moderator: Oh so it's not that you think that you won't die early, you are just not afraid of it?

Andre: Yeah, I am not afraid. I walk 3 or 4 am at night and I still go to certain places that it is risky to go. I have seen so much death. Even my good friends that I trust and who has a child with my sister died

Moderator: How old was he when he died?

Andre: 21

Moderator: You have a lot of people dying in their 20's

Andre: Yes man lots of them die in their 20's. None of them reach 30

Moderator: And you are 26?

Andre: Yes

Moderator: So you are one of the older ones now?

Andre: (laughter) Yes with facial hair and all so I am glad for that you know Jah Jah give me some extra life

Moderator: So you are an old man at 26 because of where you live. It's a serious thing!

Andre: Yeah man 26 is old; it's like reaching grandfather stage

Moderator: (laughter)

Andre: Yeah man. It is not a joke man. I have a friend that died when he was 15. An altercation developed between him and some other boys and he has running his mouth and they shot him in the face. I went to the nine night and, when I left, my grandmother told me that my friend's spirit followed me home.

Moderator: Do you have a lot of politics in your community?

Andre: Politics?

Moderator: Yes, I am trying to think of all the things that limit you because you said your education, your family, I know about the community I was just wondering about the wider thing now

Andre: Yes, politics in the community

Moderator: Did that affect you at all?

Andre: No not really because those we call politicians are all for themselves and they only look out for certain others. They don't really look out for the youths and that why the community doesn't run right. Quite often

me and my friend go up to the MP's office and we voted for them recently and when jobs are given they give only people who are seasoned in taking political handouts but we, as the young ones, they do nothing for us. CSJP programme is better than the politicians and should be awarded more funding.

Moderator: About how many young people do you think benefit from CSJP

Andre: There is one who is at camp right now and you have more on the other side of the lane. I don't go around there but it's about 4-5 and still more go to the HEART programme.

Moderator: Do you like the HEART programme?

Andre: Yes, I like the welding.

Moderator: Ok, are there any other solutions for you? Apart from the job and the training. Is that it?

Andre: No, I don't see anything else. That's what I would want to get back on track because now I am not working and not making any money but I am holding on and I would like some help. CSJP has done a lot for me I couldn't blame them; I would have to blame the community. The one guy that was successful was raised in a strict way but we are 'corner youths'. But I really like the programme.

Moderator: Alright.

The End.

LIFE STORY 7

Pseudonym: Dashawn

Age: 25

Community: Mountain View

Siblings: DaShawn is familiar with 4 brothers and 4 sisters. Six belong to both mother and father; 3 boys and 3 girls. For both parents, Dashawn is second to last child. His father has other children whom he does not know.

DaShawn's father is now dead.

DaShawn has had the benefit of being encouraged by his parents but without strict discipline from his father, he succumbed to negative peer influence from an early stage. This involved lack of interest in school, drug use, partying

DaShawn did poorly in school; however, he also had the fortitude (which be says is rooted in his father's positive influence) to return to school on his own initiative when he recognized his failings. He has progressed, admirably, with CSJP's assistance.

DaShawn credits CSJP with ending the patterns of behaviour to which he had become accustomed: sitting on the corner and doing nothing. He recognizes that many of his peers are subsisting on the corner and are being drawn into patterns of violence because they lack strong parental influence. Programmes, such as CSJP, need to do even more to reach the youth who are most negatively affected.

Meanwhile DaShawn has learnt lessons, including on the importance of continual involvement with and firm guidance of his own child, which he hopes will allow him/her to make better choices than he (DaShawn) did.

Moderator: Okay. So you told me your father died 3 years ago right? How did he die?

DaShawn: From a sickness you know, I'm not sure of the sickness but he died from a sickness.

Moderator: Ok. And how did that affect you?

DaShawn: Well, it affected me a lot you know because he was the one who was always there behind me to push me.

Moderator: Did he encourage you a lot?

DaShawn: Yeah, he encouraged me. He is the one I really looked up to.

Moderator: Did he encourage you more than your mother did?

DaShawn: Yeah, he encouraged me more than my mother did because when they broke up I lived with him. They broke up from I was about 5 years old. And I spent most of my life with him; so he was my hero.

Moderator: So, you were twenty-two when he died?

DaShawn: Yes. I was 22.

Moderator: Tell me now about school when you were much younger. When you were tiny, where did you go to school? Which primary school or all age school did you attend?

DaShawn: I went to Rollington Town Primary.

Moderator: And how was that?

DaShawn: It was good you know, because going to school at that age, my father was behind me and it was okay; that is, until I passed and went to Tivoli High School. And you know, going to school, getting bigger and getting to know new friends and so on…that's where it really went wrong.

Moderator: Tell me about that. Was it because of the peer influence at school?

DaShawn: Yes. Because you meet guys from all different communities, and they are doing all kinds of things. I started smoking while at high school. School didn't really interest me anymore and my father was not the serious one to bring down a lot of pressure on me. He is the person I lived with at the time. And although he was behind me, it was mostly talking that he did. He did not beat me or fight me or anything like that. So at the end of the day, when he would say something, I would say, yes, and then I would go back and do a different thing. He was behind me and supported me going to school and so on but with me and my new friends from all these communities ….going to friends homes and started talking to girls, (I had my first girlfriend)….You find out that the wrong thing is what makes you more popular and more famous, so this led me in a different direction.

Moderator: Tell me about the wrong thing. What are you referring to?

DaShawn: Like I don't have any interest in school at a point in time. Around ninth grade, I had no interest in school because, you mostly stay outside and smoke and it's like I didn't really want to learn; I just wanted to look a girl; just want a new girl because that was the in-thing with everybody. It was like a competition in the group of us. It was like a competition; every man wanted a new girl. We brought weed to school and we went to classes that we liked, if we liked a teacher. The English class, I liked English and I liked the English teacher so you would find me at English class. I didn't like Math so when it was Math time you wouldn't see me; I skipped class. I just went to class on and off, I was not really attending each and every class.

Moderator: How you did overall in high school?

DaShawn: I am not going to lie, I didn't do good but the greatest thing is that at primary school, I learnt a little. I can help myself to read and write and so it's just that that is really helping me now because in high school I did really bad.

Moderator: Did you pass any subjects?

DaShawn: I didn't pass any subjects; I didn't get to do any subjects.

Moderator: Why not? Why didn't you get to do them?

DaShawn: I got kicked out of school. Tenth grade I was expelled. Leaving out of ninth grade to go to tenth grade I got expelled so I never made it to tenth grade, so you know that was really bad. I was at my yard for a while until I start seeing where I was going wrong and started to get wise and get knowledge. I just started some evening classes and sent back myself at class.

Moderator: And you actually sent yourself back?

DaShawn: Yes, I actually sent back myself.

Moderator: When did you start sending back yourself? What age was that?

DaShawn: Around 18. Around 18, I sent back myself. I realized that every day it was just the same thing, you were not seeing any way out. Everybody just on the corner and you were not seeing any way out.

When you start thinking about your family and your future and your life: How is my life going to end up, which way I am going to turn? You don't see any way out; you're just on the corner. The youth just have hopes and dreams to go to foreign (abroad) to see if they can sell drugs or if you can meet somebody in life, a girl to help you...I didn't see an I am saying I don't see any independent way out. So I was really thinking that if I was the next area leader, I could run the place; I could come by money or whatsoever. So I said "Is that the only way out?" I started thinking and I said that I don't like how my life going.

When you look in the community you see some 50-odd (over 50) year old men on the corner. On the same corner, you have the old and young. You have everybody bundled on the same corner and when you really look and you say: "What did those big man do with their lives?" I was saying that I didn't really want go down the same road that they did so I was really thinking and meditating: Where is the road I want to go? Which road I am going down? Where I am going take it from? I looked and I didn't see any help. I didn't see any help, I didn't see any way out. I was wondering if my life was really done right here and I was just going to live until I am old and then die with no money.

I just started doing my little to send myself back to a class and said I really want to do two subjects and take it if there but eventually it never reached that far because as I started to go class a war started in the community, so I had to break it. When war is in the community you find out that you can't go out, you have to stay in, so I have to end up breaking it. I was brushing up before I did the subjects, so that's what the class was all about: brushing up and then go do two subjects. So I I never finished brushing up to do the subjects. War started and I had to break and couldn't really leave the community.

Moderator: Where did you work?

DaShawn: I used to work at a biscuit company. I would clean the biscuit line.

Moderator: How old were you when the war started, in what age range?

DaShawn: When the war started, I was probably 20. Then it cooled off for a while, because you had the politicians and the MP come in and say the war must be finished and they broke the war. Then the war started up again, the same war. In the same area, the war started

up, with the same two areas fighting.

Moderator: So what did you do during that time, did you just stay in?

DaShawn: I really stayed in most time because you find out that you have innocent people going to work -- you find out that an innocent man going to work and man from the next side will kill him. People from my side were doing the same thing. If they can't catch the men who are in the war or on their battle field, they start to target the people going to road, like an innocent man going to work...they meet him half at Half-Way-Tree or they meet him downtown and kill him. That kind of get me scared, that make me really don't want to go out to look work. I just wanted the war over because I didntt want to get caught into it because I don't want to lose my life.

Moderator: How did your mother survive?

DaShawn: I never ended up living with my mother again. I lived with my bigger brother. He went to England. When he went to England, I was about 15. He went to England and I was on my own. It was he, his girlfriend, their daughter and me who lived in the same house. He went to England with his girlfriend and his daughter.

Moderator: So you live in the same house now?

DaShawn: Yes, the same house.

Moderator: Is this by yourself?

DaShawn: Yes, yes. When they left I end up living in the house by myself, taking care of myself.

Moderator: Do you take care of your mother too?

DaShawn: Yes, I take care of my mother but my mother is really a hustler because she also sells. My mother really loves me even though my father was the man I was around and he is my hero. Because he is a man and, as a man, you attach to a man but my mother is still my angel because there is nothing in the world what my mother has that she wouldn't give to me. She even takes care of me now at this moment because if I call her and say I want so forth, as long as she has it, I am going to get it. If she doesn't have it then I don’t but I take care of my mother as well, not financially because it's not like I am working or something that I could really take care of her. When

she wants help and I have anything in my possession, I help her. I help her because I really love my mother; she is my angel.

Moderator: But how do you eat? I want to understand how you eat. When the war going on, how did you get money? How did you eat?

DaShawn: Well, you start to depend on people in your surroundings and you start to depend also on the people...the man who were involved in the war. I would climb a tree, an ackee tree or mango tree; I do some hustling; if somebody wants something to be done I get it done. If you want your rubbish emptied, we would empty your rubbish and chopped your yard. We survived off little and sometimes nothing. We just tried to survive. I would beg a man a thing. A man would give you a thing if he has it but you find out that everybody was the same situation. It's not like any of us were rich or had it but we shared our little. A group of us in the community, we shared the little and we survive off doing things, helping out other people and you will get a little money here and there and you take care of yourself.

Moderator: So apart from the violence, people get along?

DaShawn: Yes, people get along. You have disagreements among groups of people but people really get along. Now and again you find out someone will argue, someone would fight, but people put their differences aside and they get along. The people get along very much.

Moderator: How did you learn about CSJP?

DaShawn: I was on the corner, the same corner, I think it was an afternoon. I was on the same corner and Ms. Adams came on the corner and she -- it was just after a war, the first time the war break, because I had to break from the program once because of the same war. The first time the war break, just after the war she come on the corner and she was telling us about the program and she was saying that we were going to camp out, and after we camp out we are going to get a job. I said yes. I wanted a job because nothing was going on. And as I said, down on the corner every day and you beg a man can't really help you, and I said all right. Anyway we got in the program and we ended up -- no, it was Keisha first, she worked for the same place. Keisha, she first, and she sent me to the camp and the camp wasn't working out because I was a different man then than now. I wasn't

really as wise. So I was at the camp and the soldiers wanted to be superior over us…it was the camp up in the hills…and they wanted to try to bring us their way. At that time, I didn't have the knowledge to know that at the end of the day it was the right thing; you are going to get help. At that time, we were ignorant and dark on the corner because we were grown against one another, ignorant and dark, and at that time we never tried and let anybody lead us or push us around.

The program, we were up there and it never went on well because the soldiers were trying to tell us when to wake, when to sleep and at 8:00 o'clock! We were not used to that life. We were not used to sleeping at 8:00 o'clock and we have to wake up 5:00 in the morning and get stuff. We used to just sleep whenever we wanted to sleep and wake whenever we waked. So that created a big problem and a little war went on in the hills and we ended up break from the program because we were saying that is a job that we really wanted. We didn't know that this was what we were going to get, so we end up breaking from the program for a while. The program broke for a while.

DaShawn: Ms. Adams came and she came on the corner and told us about the CSJP programme through HEART. A lot of the youth said they were not going on that; that it was a joke thing. For them, they were finished with the school thing. But I, as a youth, from day one was ever quick. From you said school, I wanted to learn because education is the greatest, and I went on the program and picked up a skill area from the programme. And so that is how I got introduced to the programme.

Moderator: So you went to HEART.

DaShawn: Yes.

Moderator: So tell me what course did you do?

DaShawn: General construction.

MODERATOR: What level did you reach?

DaShawn: Right now I still go HEART doing Level 3 in General Construction.

Moderator: And what you plan to do after you finish with that?

DaShawn: Well, I plan to finish. From early on in my life, I love skill. I used to build my little fowl coop, chicken coop. So when I got to go to HEART it just exploded and I saw that I could do things in the house and I knew certain things so I just wanted to bring it to the fullness and make that be my career because as I was telling you before in the ghetto you don't have any career: you leave school without any subjects and you don't know which way you are going. Right now, the programme is super great to me and it shows me a way that I can reach my goal and can do whatever. I really want to do it to the full, be the best builder in the world and wherever it takes me I just really want to do the fullest and make a career uut of it.

Moderator: Tell me about the changes it has made for you. I mean you started to tell me; just give me an idea how important CSJP is to you?

DaShawn Well, it is really, really important to me… great, great. I give thanks for it and I advise any and everybody to go on the programme because as I said, in the ghetto you're just used to one thing. In the ghetto, you link your brethren; run a pot (cook), whatsoever; go on the corner, you burn two weed; and every girl that passes by you look a girl. Your days are just idle. You're just an idler; your days just pass and you are getting older and older. When I realized that at a point in my life, I said this has to change. The problem was, yes I have to change, but how? I don't have any way out so I am going to end up back on the same corner. So when this programme come -- I never realize it serious at first, but when the programme come and I start the programme and I really see it send us through. So far from off the programme I hear that them getting work and and you can get an opportunity to go away to work, and whosoever get work and a work all 40,000 a fortnight, and I start take it serious. Off the corner around 18 of us and around three of us pass out. Ms. Adams, when the three of us pass the unit and competency level, Level 1, Ms. Adams look at us and say she proud of us, and I feel great because we don't hear that everyday.

Moderator: Do you find Ms. Adams very personal in terms of her approach? How do you find her approach? Do, you find that she reaches out to young people?

DaShawn: Yes, she reaching out. Ms. Adams; we call her Jesus.

Moderator: Really?

DaShawn: My fellow classmates call her Jesus. We may come from a different

area, a different community, but the whole of us gets treated the same way. Ms. Adams treats us the same way and the whole of us are grateful and thankful and feel great about the programme. The programme is helping me and my fellow classmates everyday. If a man fails his unit, it is as if they want to bawl (cry), it is like life is going to finish or whatever; so it is helping us. We feel proud when we complete a unit and we keep on going and getting further and further, so it helps the whole of us. Ms. Adams deals with us nicely. From day one, she introduced us to the programme. She dealt with us nicely and the youths at school call her Jesus because we love when we hears she is coming. She talks to us, the approach is nice; everything is great.

Moderator: Where is the programme that you are doing located?

DaShawn: East Berry Road.

Moderator: Operation Friendship?

DaShawn: Operation Friendship.

Moderator: All right, thank you. All right, so it's Operation Friendship and you have reached Level 3. Did CSJP assist?. .(Inaudible)

DaShawn: Yes.

Moderator: Did they help all the way through?

DaShawn: Yes.

Moderator: And without that, would you have been able to?

DaShawn: I doubt that. As I said, there was a point in my life when I was saying I have nothing doing and I had tried HEART before. When I just got expelled from high school, I tried HEART. I did the HEART test and they said I was competent. I called them and even now I haven't got a response.

Moderator: So through CSJP …

DaShawn: CSJP teaming up with HEART. From we reached Operation Friendship, they gave us the same HEART test to do and after we did the HEART test, we became competent. We just started right there and then. They said next week we would start and we

started right there and then. The programme is great, it is super, super nice.

Moderator: Okay. So we heard about your family and your community. What else you think presented a challenge to you? You said the community was nice and that apart from the violence, you support each other. Is that what you said?

DaShawn: Yes.

Moderator: When you think about the violence, do you think that over the years the Government has provided enough economic opportunities, or that is a big challenge?

DaShawn: That is a big challenge. I don't see where the Government in a lot of situations has helped the young people. What I am telling you is that I am just one of the two off the corner that really escaped because you have many more around Mountain View on the corner facing the same thing and day to day they are doing the same thing. They probably want go into a skill area; probably their aim is something different. They probably are not good at a skill or whatsoever. I know on the corner -- let me tell you, on the corner there is a group of us that is always on the corner. These are young youth in my age group, probably one year older. The majority of the youth that I walk with on the corner, the whole of them are out of high school and without subjects. I have a friend now that I am trying to introduce to the programme because he wants to be on the programme. I am trying even to get him in the programme. He has six subjects and he just sit down at his yard. I have more friends with subject what just sit down at their yard.

Moderator: They can't get any job?

DaShawn Can't get any job, and they try, they try, is not like them just sit down like that, because regularly I see them out. Growing in the community, especially my community, you find out that the youth tries. Well, we find out that some don't try. Some are just lazy and stay one way, just want to be the next area leader, but majority of the youths try and you find out it's like there is no way out for them.

Moderator: There must have been something that caused you to decide you going to do something about it. Do you think it was your father's influence? What was it?

DaShawn: Yes, my father's influence, because from day one – it's not only my father's influence -- but from day one as a youth growing up my father been telling me these things: "Do a skill, do something with your life." He always wants me to do something. I never really took it that serious while on the corner. You are on the corner with your friends --because is a crab in a barrel situation, nobody really wants you reach the top while they are at the bottom and yet still most of them are not doing anything to reach the top.

Moderator: When you say your community is nice…

DaShawn: At times, you find out that men have their disagreements and because the gun is scattered in the community by the same MP and whosoever, you find out that because they have the gun as a toy and they have a dispute, men will run for one and you find out that friends will kill friends. However, without the gun you have arguments and it's done there but because they have their guns in their reach you find that the man will use it and then regret this afterwards because when they find out that they have killed persons who they grow with and eat out of the same plate, they regret after. So seeing those things in the ghetto and you a 'pree' (are considering) family, you really want a family now. You are free to get kids and what you are going to do you can't let your kids come see you on corner smoking weed, so you do whatsoever. So they need something. For your kids to come see you doing this, to say my father was this. It is my father who has influenced me. My friends are trying all the way. Your parents, your mother and father tell you that you need something good, so there is there is a lot of influence that caused me to make a difference in my life.

Moderator: Have you ever been in a gang?

DaShawn: No, I was never into a gang but we are into the community and that is like a gang but we don't classify it as a gang. Because you are in the community and you live in this place and this place wars against that place because this place is Labourite and that place is PNP. That is also a gang because you are into an area and this area is warring against the other area. So you are in the area where it comes from. You have times when you will be there and you hear that a man comes up and kicks off a door, kills somebody's son, and kills the lady and whatsoever, and when you as a young man in the community really looks on it and says: "But wait, that youth who died is not a bad man, he was never involved in the war," you know

what that leaves you to do: to start protect yourself because you find out that men are killing anybody whether you're peaceful or you are violent or whatever. So you say that you are not lying down and allow a man to come in and kill you; that is how you fall into the system.

Moderator: And I guess you say they are defending their own turf?

DaShawn: Yes.

Moderator: Were you involved in that too?

DaShawn: People defend their turf. I have been involved, but not really deep to hurt someone. I am in the place and so I watch out. You know, I am out there at night-time with the men and thing. My aim was never to cause hurt. From I was a youth growing up, I did not wish to hurt people, because I didn't see my father as that type of person; he is a rastaman. I saw him draw him challis and talk about love so I don't grow to hurt a next one. But because of circumstances, I watch out and things. I have never tried to hurt a man yet but I look out and whatsoever... like a protector, you know.

Moderator: When you see other young men hurting others, do you think it has anything to do with the family they have?

DaShawn Most of the youths in the community, most of them don't grow with a father and most youth, most youth their fathers died in the same gang war so they grow with a vengeance for the other side. Therefore, you find out that it is not finishing. A man down the road kills my father so I must kill off them because a so them grow. But most of the youth...most of my friends on the corner they don't have a father. It either that their father is dead or that their mother has gotten pregnant and she doesn't know who got her pregnant or the father left them. They don't really see a father figure. That is why I love my father. I love my mother also. They might not live together but the two of them influence my life.

Moderator: Can anything can be done to better promote the programme ?

DaShawn I feel that they need more persons like Ms. Adams to go into the ghetto to try get out some youths because some youth in the ghetto are into their shells and they don't know what the wider world is; I was one of those youths. If they can go into the ghetto

to take out a lot of the youth out of their shells and give them an opportunity, I feel that they will do more. Ms. Adams is personal; I can call and talk to her. It is a long time now that I haven't seen this programme come back around to my community because you have more youths around my way who really want to get on the programme. It is as if through the programme I am a role model. Some of my friends have nothing doing and they want to get into the programme and they hear me talk about the programme and they hear I am at a supervisor level and the opportunity is there for me to get work and I can send them to a building. They see how it is helping me and so they would love to get help but they don't see the programme around for awhile now.

Moderator: Do you think it would be of value...to work with the parents?

DaShawn: It is good to get the parents involved and younger girls involved because some of them get pregnant young and really don't have a way out. To get them involved and really get the men involved. It is necessary to really get the fathers involved. You'd have to come with 'leniency' and benefits because if a man feels that you going to take him up and go to a programme and at the end of the race there are benefits, he will still want benefits now because he wants money to buy little juice; he probably wants to buy his little weed. There are men who love their sneakers, their 'criss' pair of shoes and whatsoever so you have to really go deep and bring a little 'leniency' to the men. When a girl will come out ... you see a girl will come out if they hear about something that they want. A man will hear about it but because of border-lines and even enemies, he is not going to road. So if you can go into the ghetto to try get them out, you will change a youth's life.

Moderator: Are there any other gaps that you think we can fill for the young people in your community?

DaShawn: Especially for me, if they have a programme...meaning an educational programme other than HEART..that would help. Education programmes can prepare youth, such as with 2 CXC subjects. I am at Level Three now. I am doing a diploma but I would love to and can do a degree as well. In order for me to do a degree I have to get subjects and go UWI or UTECH. They should have an educational programme for who can't really fit into reading and writing and they should have a remedial programme for those people as well, and if they can branch off (further devlop) when the programme is done, they encourage that. The programme is

helping a lot of youth. Some might not make it through and some make it through but when you help a bunch of youth and you find out that everybody comes out of HEART now with their Level 1 or Level 3, you can't just let them go because they are going to go back to where they are coming from. So if they even create a company and employ some of them youth that would be good because, as I told you before, a lot of my friends have subjects so that means that they have been through school and they can't get employed so they are all back into the same area war and the same corner and they get a girl pregnant and don't look on her and whatsoever. So you find out that when a young man has nothing doing, his hand is idle, his mind is idle, so he think and does idleness. I would love to see if I could get a degree. I have my child on the way I can know that when I leave of HEART I can really get a job that I can get above the minimum wage so I can help my family.

Moderator: You talk about the support you need afterwards. Would it have to include life skills? If you are a guy on the corner and you go through, do you think you would just automatically be less likely to go back on the corner or would you need more support?

DaShawn: You are going to need more support because remember that some youth... You find a problem there even at the camp. Some people on the corner are not going to just come out.... Some people take the corner with them and it is with consistency that they forget about the corner, see the aim and see their future. You are going to want a life skill and you are going to want to mentor and support them in order to keep the youth onn track. Don't bother to get them on a level and then when they are competent in that level,you leave them. If so, they are going to end up you right back on the corner doing the same thing, so you have to mentor; you have to check on them. It would be good for me if I had people in high places, a friend I can call on for any little thing. That friend talks to me and is my mentor and guides me through my problems. I can call upon someone; I have help. With life skills, you can reason with someone because each one teaches one and you need somebody to talk to when you are down. You reason with someone and tell him; you show him the way out and so forth.

And the thing over the camp now, that is also good because right now I am going to HEART and I am at camp a do a course as well and trying to get competent. That's good because it's hard. When I just got there and the soldiers force you to march with them behind you. Every minute, you have to follow rules and regulations.

I am there for about a month and few weeks now. At first, I would say everywhere we are going we have to form lines but I have now internalized it as part of life skills and it helps me.

Moderator: May I ask you now, how you going to prevent your own child from going along the path you went? How will you ensure that your child can make different choices?

DaShawn: My plan, as soon as I heard that I have a child on the way… my plan is to be the father figure in my son's life or my daughter's life, with the mother by my side. We are going to try because I see where my father went wrong. My father was laid back. He talked but he was laid back. I am going to be there full speed, because if my father had check up, things would be different. He gave you lunch money to go school but yet he did not really check up. He did not really sit down with me and with a book 24/7. Those days ended when I left primary school. Him was busy doing his own thing, so that teaches me that you have to be there in every situation. Even when I was in high school, I was behind him. He should have checked my book and so on. That is where my father went wrong. He gave me lunch money but when I stopped from class he did not turn up at school unless he got a call that I did something and then he started talking to me, saying ray ray ray (arguing). He needed to be there more and to play a part, build a friendship even with the school or whatsoever. I am making some plans that are going to help my child not go down the road that I went down.

Moderator: Are you going to get married?

DaShwan: It's in the plan for me but not right now. I have it in mind and in the plan. I hope it can come out.

Moderator: Don't live you with your girlfriend?

DaShawn: I live with my girlfriend; I am the man in my family. I have become a man in my family.

Moderator: Did you tell me everything?

DaShawn: I told you everything that I want you know about what you asked me.

The End

LIFE STORY 8

Pseudonym 1: Munchie, Age 23

Pseudonym 2: Miss P, Munchie's mother, Age 48

Community: August Town: African Gardens

Siblings: Munchie had 2 brothers, now deceased. She has one sister.

Household: Munchie's parents divorced. Her mother lives in her house, along with 3 grandchildren. Munchie has her own house, which she shares with her boyfriend.

Education: Munchie went to a technical high school. Her mother did not complee primary education.

Miss P started having children at age 15. Munchie started at age 19 and sister at age 17.

This family described the ways in which poverty has compromised the life chances of successive generations. However, other conditions appear common. For example, it is worthwhile to note the patterns of abuse within this family. Ms T claims that she has had a 'wonderful relationship' with her former partner and cites his support for the children as a major benefit. The only deterrent was the physical abuse, which she states was continuous. Even having divorced, she portrays Munchie's father as a wonderful man, whom she will find it hard to replace: "I don't think I can find a next man like him." His control and abuse appears minimized because he was and is a reliable provider.

Ms. T then levied the same physical---compounded by verbal---abuse, which she has escaped from through divorce, at her children. She reasons that she hated 'back chat'. Therefore, she would use stones and machetes to enforce her rules.

Munchie is now abusive to her partner and, on occasions, disrespectful to her mother. Although she is regretful of the disrespect, Muchie recognizes that the ways in which parents treat their children are among the reasons for the low regard that children then show to parents.

Similarly, life choices appear transmitted across generations. Patterns of early pregnancy are repeated across generations and the conditions underpinning them are the same: poverty, low levels of education and awareness, limited opportunities and restricting thought processes.

CSJP has had a major role in disrupting patterns. Ms T's involvement in the parenting programme has had important benefits, such that she now functions as a motivator within her community. Yet, more needs to be done. Despite her involvment with CSJP, Muchie has made choices that can worsen her circumstances. She has also not dealt with her anger and is, therefore, involved in and perpetuating abuse.

The story tells of the accepted behaviours within the wider community, which programmes such as CSJP are challenged to confront: rampant rape and sexual promiscuity as well as the fear and the violence that silence these occurrences.

Moderator: Right, so the focus is going to be on your life story Munchie but we wanted to talk to your mother as well. Some interventions include the family and some don't and it is good for us to see whether family interventions make it better for young people. I talked with some young people yesterday and they told me that when they go back to the same context and their parents are not involved it makes it a bit harder so we wanted to talk about that a little but first we will focus on the life stories. I am going to start with you (Mom). You know sometimes the mother's life story becomes the life story of the daughter…

Ms. T: Right

Moderator: That's how it is you know, it's passed down across generations. So tell me a little bit about you. Were you born in August Town?

Ms. T: No, I was born in Gordon Town

Moderator: Okay, and your parents, are they still alive? Any of them?

Ms. T: No, only my father's still alive; my mother died.

Moderator: Okay

Moderator: Were your mother and father married?

Ms. T: No

Moderator: But they lived together?

Ms. T: Yes, they used to

Moderator: How many children did they have?

Ms. T: Seven

Moderator: Did they then split up?

Ms. T: Yes, they just tore apart like that

Moderator: And how did you feel about that?

Ms. T: Bad because my mother alone had to raise all of us. It was hard for her because she had to do everything. Sometimes some children go

school two days or three days and then had to stop so that another set can go because she couldn't afford all of us.

Moderator: She couldn't send all of you at the same time.

Ms. T: Yes

Moderator: Now, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

Ms. T: I have three brothers; there are three boys and four girls

Moderator: Three boys and four girls. Are they all alive?

Ms. T: No out of all of us, 1 died; that was my biggest brother

Moderator: How did he die?

Ms. T: I don't know, we just got a call that he died

Moderator: Okay, alright, so are you the oldest one for your parents?

Ms. T: No, I'm the fourth one

Moderators: What about your sisters and brothers, are they all married?

Ms. T: Only one is married

Moderator: Has everybody split up or are they together?

Ms. T: My biggest sister's husband died; a bad man killed him. The others split up; nobody is with anyone

Moderator: Okay, when did your mother start having children?

Ms. T: Early…you know they don't tell us things like that…

Moderator: And you started having children at 16?

Ms. T: Yes

Moderator: And how many do you have?

Ms. T: I have four, but two passed away; the two boys died.

Moderator: How did the two boys die?

Ms. T: Violently

Moderator: In the August Town area?

Ms. T: Yes

Moderator: Were they involved?

Ms. T: At that time, no

Moderator: So it was a case of being at the wrong place at the wrong time?

Ms. T: The first one, he was coming home from work and stopped by my brother. I don't know what went on because the two of us were at work but shooting happened and he died. This one now, the first of May he was working at her baby father's house and they say man came out to kill another man and he stepped out and they shoot him.

Moderator: Do you mean the first of May this year?

Ms. T: Yes, this is just the other day.

Moderator: How are you managing?

Ms. T: Jesus Christ girl, it is killing me even now.

Moderator: But it must affect you; it's just August

Ms. T: Yes, it terrible, terrible, terrible, terrible. When we were up by Emancipation way, that is the day they attacked him. They invited us and I didn't even know they were going to do it. They caught us by surprise and they just shot him and killed him. My girl, I'm not lying; it is rough.

Moderator: Let us diverge a little. I want to ask you tell me about your husband. You say you're not together. Was it a good relationship?

Ms. T: Yes, good good, good relationship but he loves to listen to hearsay and he was abusive and I didn't like the abuse.

Moderator: Was he was abusive physically? Did hit you and stuff?

Ms. T: Yes, that was the only thing but everything else was good but the abuse part

Moderator: Was it regular?

Ms. T: Yes, every minute, as soon as people tell him something he wouldn't try and prove it,he would just go at you

Moderator: Was it like a fight?

Ms. T: I fight back of course but I couldn't win. But I try; I couldn't just take his beatings. It didn't work out

Moderator: So how many years would you have been with him now?

Ms. T: Ha, I would have been in the relationship more than eight years straight

Moderator: And how long were you married?

Ms. T: I was married to him at 22

Moderator: And when did you get divorced?

Ms. T: About 9 or 10 years ago.

Moderator: How do you feel about the divorce?

Ms. T: One hundred percent. He helps with the children and life is better

Moderator: You were telling me about school, that you stopped in primary school

Ms. T: No all age school

Moderator: So you didn't do any subjects then?

Ms. T: None at all

Moderator: But you are able to read and write?

Ms. T: Yes

Moderator: Why did you leave school? Did you get pregnant?

Ms. T: No, I had to help my mother. At that time she was a higgler and I had to help her sell to provide for the smaller ones. She was trying to push them but I always love my mother so anything she said I would do because she had no one to help her so I just decided to quit and not go back

Moderator: You just started selling with your mother

Ms. T: Yes and I just started my own life and that's it.

Moderator: Was it then that you met Munchie's father?

Ms. T: I met him in school but we didn't have a relationship; it was just hi and hello. I wasn't interested in a relationship because I had a big brother who was very stern with me. So we would just talk, no sex. We were in a relationship since my pregnancy and he was never disrespectful. After seven years we decided to get married. We were already accustomed to each other and he took good care of the child who died May 1st, he treated him like he was his child. It was a wonderful home;

trust me. I don't think I can find a next man like him. Good men are out there but they would have to look after the children because as he continues to support them even though they are grown. He took care of everybody 100%. It's just the abuse still. He tried to help them and gave them anything they wanted.

Moderator: Okay, so you got married and then you were still buying and selling

Ms. T: well that was my…(muffled)

Moderator: So how did you learn about CSJP?

Ms. T: Them? How did I learn about it? Angella Harris came in this area and hooked up with my daughter, Johanna. Joanna and her started linking up. CSJP brought Ms Harris in it because in the area that we are living, everybody is just loose. I don't even know how they got linked up. If she called her and said "Joanna, I need 100 people by 12 o' clock tomorrow", my daughter would go out there and get everybody she could get off the road and introduce her and that's how Johanna and Ms Harris linked up. At that time, people cursed and fought often and one day my daughter asked Ms. Harris if they could help me. I thought they needed the help more than I did. I wasn't focused on that.

Moderator: Did she get Munchie involved in the National Youth Service?

Ms. T: Yes and then there was a HEART programme in Rockfort. It was a house cleaning course and everyone who went there with me wanted to disrespect my daughter, even though she helped to get them there. I said no way, she is only trying to help and I disrupted it and everyone went their own way. I tried again and I got involved with the PRPII and I graduated and got two certificates. I wish it would continue so that I could get involved in other organizations because I didn't expect to reach this far to be in an interview with you, especially because of the type of person I was. Ask them, I have stopped using profanities.

Moderator: So, did you abuse them? Did you beat?

Ms. T: Yes man, what!!! Beat them? I used stone and machete to beat them. I didn't know what I doing. Do you know how angry I was?

Moderator: What were you angry about? Was it your husband?

Ms. T: No man. I have no feelings left for him. I don't like when I speak to them and they give me backchat. When they do that, I don't speak, I use something to hit them down.

Moderator: Where do you live Munchie?

Munchie: I live in my own house with my boyfriend

Moderator: And your mother was okay with that?

Munchie: I am a big woman now.

Moderator: And then you got pregnant. Why do you think that happened, at age 19, in your case?

Munchie: I never thought anything really, because I was working. My mother was pushing me to buy a house so I felt like a woman and decided to live with a boy friend.

Moderator: Why did you go to live with him in the first place, rather than stay home?

Munchie: My mother pushed me to buy the house, I bought the house and with my boyfriend lived up the road. Eventually we were going to agree to live together.

Ms. T.: I didn't agree with them living together. I talked to them and told them that was going to happen; it's not that I didn't' warn them and say don't go there because it is going to happen.

Moderator: Why do you think they went there despite your telling them not to?

MS. T.: They just wanted to prove themselves, to show they are big. I didn't want it for them. I told them I didn't want what happened to me come back to happen to them. When they are like that I still have the problem, and I don't want the problem with them. I don't have any time for them, I want to go out and look for myself but I have to look for them; there are three set of persons now. It's hard.

Moderator: So tell me now (Munchie), you had your first child at 19 and then what did you do?

Munchie: What did I do? I got frustrated because the income was not coming as I expected. I went to evening class and I pushed to get the work downtown. My Mother motivated me. That is why I went up and got an interview by the clothes store downtown.

Moderator: Let me understand you now. You finished NYS. How old were you when you got the job?

Munchie: I was 21.

Moderator: Were you still involved with CSJP at that time?

Munchie: No, you know.

Moderator: So is that where things are now? What sort of involvement do you have with CSJP now?

Munchie: I don't have any.

Moderator: So you haven't had any involvement since…

Munchie: From the National Youth Service, I didn't get a chance. No, I didn't have any involvement since completing Level 1.

Moderator: And now you are having twins. So how are you going to manage?

Munchie: By the grace of God and the little work I am doing.

Moderator Did you see your mummy's eyes a while ago? Tell me why you made that choice to have children now.

Munchie: To be honest I was okay with the first one….

Moderator: Are you worried?

Munchie: Yes, I am stressed.

Moderator: Let me ask you something. Well, I am not in your situation so I just have to imagine. If you had more of a support network, would it have made a difference? Your mother supported you. Have you got any support apart from CSJP?

Munchie: No.

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Moderator: Are you stressed because of it?

Munchie: I am stressed because of it.

Moderator: No, other support?

Munchie: No.

Moderator: I am just wondering if you got the support, if you would have made a different choice. Why I am asking you this? In the same way that your mother tried to make a difference, how would you make a different way for your children? What sort of network do you think young people need right at the stage when they are making these decisions?

Munchie: I couldn't go to my mother because she didn't have the time, as she had to fend for us. My mother was always gone and my father was at the gambling house, so he didn't have any time. The connection was never there. If I had somebody... When the National Youth Service came around people were happy. I was a young girl and in the community. When I started to work at Mona Post Office, I felt all right because if I stayed home I would have gotten pregnant very early, from the age of 13.

Moderator: I was wondering about the CSJP. Did you call them for advice or did you not have that sort of relationship.

Munchie: We have a close relationship. Because I got pregnant and I have to go find work I did not have the time. If I call them, they can give me good advice. Sometimes I cry.

Moderator: (To Ms T) If CSJP were to deepen it's programme, what sort of support do you think your daughter would have needed for her to make other choices? How would you advise CSJP to make the programme stronger?

Moderator: (To Munchie) Did you do the parenting component?

Munchie: I don't know if the parenting included the young people like my age.

Ms. T: The younger people can learn but I don't know why they are the way they are. They do not want to listen; they are rude and disrespectful. Sometimes you have to think twice about what you are to say to them. You are teaching them the right things but they don't want to listen and heed until they 'buck them toe' (encounter some misfortune); that's when they come back. We a advising them and they don't make the choices we suggest.

Moderator: Let me just figure this out. As you talk, I am wondering. First of all, do you think they would listen better if they hear from somebody else?

(To Munchie) Why do you feel that young people are disrespecting their parents?

Munchie: It could be because of what they see in the house or peer influence.

Moderator: (To Ms T) Do you feel that if somebody got up and taught them the way you are talking about parenting that it would have made more of a difference than if you tell them? Would they listen more to others, to say Mr. Simmons?

MS. T.: I feel so; I think so.

Moderator: Regarding disrespect, what do you think is at the root of it? Are you disrespectful of your mother too?

Munchie: Sometimes I talk to her badly, which at the end of the day I am sorry about because it is reflecting on me. Personally, sometimes it's the way that parents treated us; that is the reason why.

Moderator: Is that why you respond in the same way?

Munchie: Yes.

Moderator: What do you think about your community? Do you think that growing up in a particular community you tend to adopt those things?

Munchie: You see a young girl growing up and she doesn't have a father or mother. The mother has no time for her. She lives with friends and sometimes they start to get money at a certain age and they want be into a certain type of crew; they try to adopt certain ways.

Moderator: But at the end, it doesn't work out?

Munchie: At the end of day it doesn't work out.

Moderator: Is molestation very common among the young persons now?

Munchie: Yes.

Moderator: Very common?

Munchie: Very common.

Moderator: To what extent do you think that CSJP understands molestation and

what happens...

Moderator: (To Ms T) Was your husband at the time older than you or the same age (15)?

Ms. T.: Older.

Moderator: Did he commit a wrong?

Ms. T.: Yes but at that time nobody knew about it in the way we do now. Now, I don't take those chances. [My stance is] don't fool around with my little pickney (child) or boy pickney now. My eyes are open because I know certain things. Back then nobody cared. Now, I go training and I know what abuse and self-esteem are; I know all those things

Moderator: A lot of people of your generation met upon a lot of abuse and they suffered and got no counseling

MS. T.: That always inside of you. it is like A when something happen to you, you go back and say ...

Moderator: Abuse is at the root of many things: physical abuse, sexual abuse etc. The young girls, how do they act out when they are abused? Let me ask you (Munchie) first, how common it is? What percentage of girls do you think are abused?

Munchie: In the community?

Moderator: Yes.

Munchie: I would say basically all the young girls.

Moderator: Are you serious?

Munchie: Yes. Because is like they are fine now and then by two months you see them with a belly (pregnant). They just transform and you can't talk to them.

Moderator: How old are the boys who get them pregnant?

Munchie: Much older.

Moderator: I am just wondering, is there anything that can be done through

programmes like CSJP to try to prevent abuse?

Munchie: Get them mentors; get them a lot of mentoring. These should be elder mentors, not young mentors, give them elder mentors many like a Mamma and Daddy.

Ms. T.: In the area I live, it's just the mothers alone; there are no fathers because many die from gunshots. Mothers go to work just to bring something for them. It's not that parents don't try. Their mothers will be at work and as you step out, you see them and you can't say anything to them. We try. I know I try, but as long as this programme is concerned, I want it to work because it works

Moderator: Tell me, if you were in charge of programme and you know the needs like those of your daughter, your family and the others around you, how would you expand?

MS. T.: First thing is, I would have a Community Center because many of them can't find the bus fare. Even though I know it is going to be difficult, a little skill training near them--- where they can walk to---in the community would help. Then, find something for the children when them come home from school. Find something for them to do. Also, give them some mentoring, something that causes them to push (develop). If they can get books to read, then they could have a big network to push them, help them. That is the way. In the community I know CSJO has tried in there already but it is important to go deeper down. Come in, put a mentor into each house. We know money is not there for that. We know it's hard and it's also hard to find mentors for so many houses but try. I wouldn't mind if you started tomorrow because I would be gone on another programme again but the community needs it.

Moderator: Would you be a mentor?

MS. T.: Yes, yes, I do a lot of mentoring. Others do it too.

Moderator: (To Munchie) Tell me what you are going to do now after you have your baby. Tell me your fears now and what you think can be done?

Munchie: I am afraid at the moment sometimes, but I know that it is my responsibility to go out there and make sure everything is right. I would have loved to get a better job because I am not comfortable where I am now but give God thanks for it. I have to just keep trying. I don't want my daughter grow up the way I grew up. The way it is now,

I have to have her in the house, I don't make guys come around her, I don't let anybody lift her up because I am just scared of certain abuse.

Moderator: Were you abused?

Munchie: No, no.

Moderator: So why are you so scared for that?

Munchie: Because some young girls see things in the community: they want boyfriends; they want quick things, and you know that just brings out the negative, so I don't want my little princess to grow up that way. Do you understand? She doesn't really have a father figure; it's only a grandmother alone is the father figure around her.

Moderator: The guy that you were with, is he is not supportive...the one you used to live with?

Munchie: It's still the same one. Right now, he doesn't have a job.

MS. T.: You see if my son had not died... He is into trade man and so he goes out, finds the work and then brings them (other young men such as Munchie's partner) on it. He used to be like the mentor for them but he's not here anymore.

Moderator: And the father you said ...

Ms. T.: It's the same one, he would go out and look work and bring them.

Moderator: The father for the children.

MS. T: My son who died the 1st of May, he was a trade man, so when he went out and got work ...

Moderator: He would bring your son in law?

MS. T.: Yes, yes, he's is like that. He goes and gets the contract.

Moderator: Do you have any subjects?

Munchie: Yes, I have two subjects and I completed the Level 1.

Moderator: Do you consider yourself to be in a bind?

Munchie: Not really.

Moderator: Because you do have a job. It's just that you want to get at better job?

Munchie: A better job.

Moderator: But you are not expecting anything from your babies' father?

Munchie: He doesn't have anything.

Ms. T.: Their father helps them out a lot but I am like a mother, father, everything for them right now. The one who died, I have to be the mother and father for his children. He left left one son when he died; that son is now 13. So you know that grandma is standing.

Moderator: Does he go to school?

Munchie: Yes.

Moderator: You don't seem to have a problem with the community, apart from the violence

Munchie: The violence.

Moderator: Do people get along?

Ms. T.: People get along. Some people are 'bad minded' and you know that is everywhere. You don't have to worry because if you want something you don't sit down, you go out.

Moderator: (To Munchie) Is your baby's father involved in any gangs or so?

Munchie: No.

Moderator: How does he keep himself away from that?

Munchie: Sometimes he go up to see his friend.

MS. T.: It's just the support and ...

Moderator: When you reflect on the wider economy and the politics and so on, what is you thinking? Have these been helpful? How you feel that has these have been affecting your family over the years

Munchie: Politics is the main thing that ruined the country. It's us who should govern our country. You and I will be here and this orange and green thing (party colours) come and tear us apart. Politics has damaged the wider society.

Moderator: What about the economy? What about your prospect as a young person? Do you think that there are enough opportunities in the country for young people?

Munchie: I think they can do more but they are trying to some extent.

Ms. T.: We want we want things like CSJP and those programmes. If we get two or of them, even though I know the overseas people are financing it, it's a worldwide thing. Politicians must come out and let those things (programmes) take charge of the country because the politicians are not doing anything for the people. They are not sending them to school or anything. There is no job anywhere at all if you want a job. The people out there right now accept that going back to school is hard; nothing is there. If we have some programmes like that we would change, you get something, but there is nothing out there. CSJP: s God has sent them to help people. Right now, where we live when they see us in our Tshirts and we graduate, everybody wants to go on the programme. I tell them yes, and it's a long time I have been telling them and them don't want to gravitate towards it. Now, they are asking when it is going to start.

Moderator: (To Munchie) When your boyfriend does welding and so on, does it give much opportunity?

Munchie: In the welding, you have a Level One. To me, if you have more than one skill it's better for you because at the end of the day you maybe can go out there and you hear that persons need a welder to make some grills. If you have the skill you can show them your certificate. The more you have is the more you benefit.

Moderator: Is your boyfriend abusive? Does he beat you?

Munchie: Who? I fight him. He can't hit me. He has some things in him mouth (uses bad language) but I am not allowing him to control me. Him doesn't really abuse him. I always create the problem. You see, the way I grew up, my mother told me not to allow any man to abuse me. I always start the problem.

Moderator: In what ways do you start the problem? How you do it?

Munchie: For example, if I don't get any money or I want something for the baby and he cannot give it to me. It doesn't make sense for him come smiling and talking if the baby needs something. I am not going to sit down and smile with him.

Moderator: What do you do?

Munchie: What do I do? I start the problem; I start cursing. It's either you go or you come. If I say something, he walks away most times.

Moderator: What sort of things does he say to hurt you?

Munchie: You know some crazy things, two expletives and then walk away. He is saying something and then walks away; he doesn't stand up and face me. I don't like when he walk away.

Moderator: You prefer that he stands up and get hit?

Munchie: Not really, but I just want to show him don't romp (mess) with me.

Moderator: Are you are angry too?

Munchie: At times, to be honest.

Moderator: Like your mother, do you feel the same way?

Munchie: No. I have taken a leaf out of her book but I kind of feel what she feeling.

Moderator: Let me ask you two different questions, two final questions.

Moderator: What the type of support do you need (Munchie) and what sort of change do you think you, your family and the community would need to make so that CSJP can work better for you?

Munchie: I will answer the first question: CSJP should push more parenting and skill training programmes within the community; that would be more better. As Mommy said, you would have somebody stand up behind the young persons. So if you get more persons, more trained to persons to push you that would help. Skills programmes are needed since most of the young persons in the community are mothers and fathers.

Moderator: At what age do they become parents?

Munchie: At the age of 14. Their baby father may get caught up in the violence. It's either you are the victim or the person committing the crime and you don't have a support right there, so if you can have a programme where you have single mothers, teenagers, teenage mothers, you have a programme to push right there. Have someone come in the community even two times a month or one time for the month, depending on the budget, and speak to the young girls about teenage pregnancy; show them the risk sand what can happen.

Moderator: Do you know you about the Women Center?

Munchie: At HalfWayTree.

Moderator: Trafalgar Road.

Munchie: Most of them don't go because they are young girls (they don't want to get the boys incarcerated).

MS. T: I tell some of them I going am going to lock them up.

Munchie: And most of the boys are in a gang and the parents may be afraid of them, so they can't have counselling.

Moderator: Regarding the young girls, do you think any of them are raped?

MS. T.: No man.

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Munchie: It's just early introduction.

Moderator: If they are under age and they get pregnant, why do you say it's not rape?

Ms. T.: Let I tell you why. You see, it is rape but why we are not going to say. They are not going to come out fully and bluntly say it.

Moderator: Because they participated?

MS. T.: Yes. Deep down, it's rape we know, but we have no proof and they cover it up.

Moderator: Is it that people accept that it is under age and it's okay, to have sex?

MS. T.: You can't talk out. Some of them will say don't watch their pickney (child).

Moderator: If they are under age that is wrong, that is a crime, but it seems as if it is not seen as a crime once the girl says "Okay, I will do it".

Ms. T.: It's not that in the community it is not a crime. You have to catch the girls and when you catch them is like it's nothing.

Munchie: I guess if they have more things to do, things at hand as my mommy said, such as evening programmes or even classes or something to keep them busy.

Ms..: The programmes try 100 percent.

Moderator: How do they try?

Ms. T: Anybody who doesn't gravitate towards it in our community, in the whole of August Town, it's because they don't want it. They keep meeting with us; CSJP tries.

Munchie: If you fail, they pull you up back up. They always tell you to come and try something.

Ms. T.: Some girls, they put them into carpentry and welding. They don't pick and choose. They send it on and you pick. They give it to us. If I knew things would work out this way from the first time I introduced it to my daughter, I would have accepted it from the first time. I did not know it was something like this. So I asked the Government to do everything to not make it (CSJP) stop; just support it. I support it 100%; don't let it stop. They must try thier best to find a way out to let it continue because it is a good programme. The first thing they tell you is about self esteem, and from your self esteem is raised, your whole character changes. If you know you want good you are going for it. Because, if I can change, surely anybody in my community can change.

Munchie: CSJP should also expand to communities. Different types of persons come from the ghetto. When they have a workshop at Hilton Hotel, at least two or three persons will go from the community. That allows you to bond with different type of persons.

Ms. T: I would not call it ghetto. I would call it 'go get go', because you are coming out of the slum you are in, shaking up yourself and advancing.

They are bringing help to your doorway and it is you who must shake up out of your little box and come out and get it. They are teaching you a skill; they are teaching you a trade. They are doing everything. What more do you want? Shake up yourself and come out and go get the training.

Moderator: Do people in the community not embrace it?

Munchie: Most of them embrace it.

Munchie: Persons don't know how to read and CSJP has them going on programmes that can help them; literacy programmes, and the little workshops and so on.

Moderator: What do you say the gap is? Is it the ongoing mentorship that would be useful to you?

Munchie: Yes.

LIFE STORY 9

Pseudonym: Ford

Age: 25 years

Date of Birth: September 11, 1986

Community: Trench Town – Federal Gardens

Siblings: 7 brothers and 1 sister. All children belong to the mother; there are 4 different fathers. Ford's parents were not married; he does not know his father.

Education: Ford's mother attended high school but has no subjects. She has been unemployed for the last 10 years.

Household: One of Ford's brothers lives overseas. Ford's mother lives separately with three children; all the other children, including Ford, have their own houses

Ford grew up in conditions of poverty. While he is part of a corner crew, he scorns the idea of committing robberies or killing for survival. Rather, he has opted to 'hustle' for survival. Hustling has involved selling marijuana and 'grabba' from age six. Like some youth within the community, he prioritized earning for survival over going to school. While, at first, be blamed the violence for his inability to complete his education, he later admitted that, among his peers, there was not much emphasis on education, which is a pattern he followed. Therefore, both factors contributed to his non-attendance.

CSJP has been instrumental in introducing and encouraging different options, first through the National Youth Service workshops and, later, via the HEART programmes; he regards the CSJP as 'life changing'. However, Ford's story portrays some of the challenges involved in promoting change. For example, he describes how the students who attended the workshop were involved in combat with the security forces while on site. As he saw it, students resented the disrespect shown by the security forces. Therefore, the longstanding resentment against the security forces played out, dramatically, during the workshop. Consequently, some students were sent home. There were/are personal challenges: Ford has not managed to complete Level 2 of HEART or the remedial reading programme, given his obligations to his friends. On a number of occasions, he recounts giving up or being willing to give up on opportunities in order to fulfill perceived responsibilities. His account shows the weight of unspoken codes (and of peer influence) on the choices that he makes. Notably, these codes lead to mixed outcomes: they forbid engagement in illicit conduct, such as robberies; insist that young men act responsibly towards their children (as 'dads', which denote responsibility as opposed to 'fathers', which does not necessarily translate to obligation) but can also stymie progress.

Ford is anticipating continued support from CSJP. He regards his transformation as dependent on sustained and comprehensive intervention, involving employment and scholarship.

Moderator: So you said that you never met your father?

Ford: My mother said he died while she was pregnant.

Moderator: Do you believe her?

Ford: Yes

Moderator: So you just grew up with your mother alone?

Ford: Yes

Moderator: And how was that?

Ford: Life wasn't easy but my mother came through still

Moderator: So she had to work to support everybody? Or how did you get funds? Did you have uncles or anybody?

Ford: I had Boys Town but because of violence I could not get to go so I ended up at a school in Half Way tree – Bethel

Moderator: Bethel? What's the name of it?

Ford: Bethel private…I can't remember

Moderator: in Half Way Tree?

Ford: Yes

Moderator: And that was for High School?

Ford: It was a private school

Moderator: So did you do any subjects there?

Ford: No

Moderator: You never finished it?

Ford: No

Moderator: Why not?

Ford: Because of violence again

Moderator: Was that in your community?

Ford: Yes I had to stop going to school

Moderator: For how long did you stop going to school?

Ford: From I was around age 16

Moderator: So you never did any subjects. Were you a part of the violence? Were you ever a part of any gang?

Ford: I was a part of it --- not doing it---but part of it.

Moderator: How did you get involved in it?

Ford: Because the street I lived on, that's where the war was and it spread all over so you had one whole community fighting against Federal Gardens and everybody: man, woman, baby had to get involved.

Moderator: And getting involved: what does that mean? What did you have to do?

Ford: Well even to look out or something to protect yourself. Do what you can do.

Moderator: Were all of you living in the house? Your file said you have 7 brothers and 1 sister

Ford: Three of my brothers lived overseas during those times.

Moderator: Ok. What job did your mother do in order to send you to school?

Ford: Domestic work.

Moderator: Inaudible

Ford: About 16 or 18 and my brothers are in their 40's

Moderator: So you told me that you had to stop school. So there was nothing that you guys could do but to stop school during the war?

Ford: Yes

Moderator: How long did you have to stay away from school?

Ford: About a year or two

Moderator: And what you do in the meantime. Did you just stay home?

Ford: Yes and sometimes you got the chance to go do an odd job and office work

Moderator: So you do some work and return home? Tell me, is it that you couldn't go to school or you just could not bother with school because it did not seem important.

Ford: Both those things. A little heat came in so we just worked with it.

Moderator: At what age did you start working?

Ford: From about 18

Moderator: And before that…is it that you used to hustle? I know that you guys consider hustling different from working

Ford: Yeah man you have to hustle in the streets

Moderator: So tell me when you started hustling?

Ford: From a tender age; from I was going to school: All Age School

Moderator: Tell me how you hustle. What did you sell?

Ford: Anything like ackee and those things and also grabba. But I never sold bag juice

Moderator: Why not bag juice?

Ford: Well that is considered a low life thing

Moderator: Selling bag juice is low life? But you will sell grabba?

Ford: Yes and at Christmas time I would sell fire rockets

Moderator: I thought grabba was recent but it sounds like it has been around for a while

Ford: Yeah, it used to be called 'bacco' from tobacco

Moderator: Oh I see

Ford: So now its grabba

Moderator: Isn't grabba weed mixed with something else?

Ford: No, grabba is something that you mix with the weed

Moderator: Oh, the other way around

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: Ok. So you sold that since you were about six?

Ford: Yes but I did not smoke it

Moderator: Do you smoke now?

Ford: No

Moderator: Do you drink?

Ford: Yes I drink

Moderator: What do you drink?

Ford: Alcohol

Moderator: What age did you start drinking?

Ford: I can't remember; long time

Moderator: Long time? Since you were a child?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: Why did you start that early?

Ford: Because in the streets you have to do things to survive and keep active. If your friends are drinking, you are going to drink too but not to get drunk.

Moderator: Was it an adult who told you to drink or taught you to drink?

Ford: No man

Moderator: Did you just do it?

Ford: Everything I did, I did on my own

Moderator: So you were in the streets a lot; you grew up in the streets even though you had a home

Ford: I had a cousin, and other community friends. Its not like we were among youths in Half Way Tree. We were in the community hanging out with friends playing ball, running boat (cooking food)

Moderator: Tell me something I talk to a number of young people and there doesn't seem to be much emphasis on education at all

Ford: Some are expelled from school or some get into violence and that causes you to stop going to school and most time they just can't be bothered after that. You see some going to school and others who don't and you decide to kick back. You also notice that some who are not in school have things that you don't have like a bicycle or a pair of skates and you know he hustled to get that so you still have to be street-wise

Moderator: You have to be street-wise?

Ford: Yes

Moderator: You grew up with a lot of guys who didn't go to school. Did the girls go to school more than the guys?

Ford: Yeah or they work.

Moderator: Or they hustled?

Ford: Yes they can't sit at home

Moderator: Was that the culture? Is that young guys were expected to grow up and hustle rather than go to school?

Ford: Well, you pick your choice

Moderator: Ok so tell me now, you didn't finish school because of the violence and also you couldn't bother, so what you did afterwards?

Ford: I did a painting job at the stadium. I helped to paint Merlene Ottey etc

Moderator: So you are an artist?

Ford: Yes, in a way.

Moderator: How long did you do that job?

Ford: Well, until the boss started to defraud me and so I gave the painting work a break and then I heard about this CSJP thing.

Moderator: How did you hear about CSJP?

Ford: One day I was at home and a girl named Keisha signed me up to attend a camp, a youth service camp for 6 weeks! I thought 'why should I leave my house for 6 weeks?' but I decided to think on it. So the day came around to take my picture and Keisha said "Come, let's do this". I felt that I shouldn't do it alone and so I told my friends about it. In all 8 of us went.

Moderator: How was the camp?

Ford: The camp was nice but again there was violence

Moderator: Why?

Ford: It was between the police and some boys

Moderator: What happened?

Ford: I heard that some men were smoking weed way up in Chestervale and the police got involved and beat a young man named Joel

Moderator: The police beat him?

Ford: Yes and it caused a disturbance, a riot in the entire camp. Everyone was there and so they decided to punish everyone. They had the boys in the auditorium and the girls were outside exercising. So, eventually a girl fainted because it was cold up there in the night. It was reported that the girl was killed and that started another upheaval and the camp property was vandalized glass broken, TV sets smashed.

Moderator: Who was running the camp? Was it CSJP?

Ford: Yeah and soldiers. The soldiers had to run

Moderator: So CSJP was running the camp and soldiers were on guard just in case?

Ford: yes

Moderator: What happened next?

Ford: Well everybody banned together, all the participants, and we determined that we wouldn't sell out and I was struck by how we banned together. So they changed everything and police started to guard now when they weren't there before and certain privileges were denied. In a way the camp got nicer and who were to be expelled got sent home.

Moderator: Did you stay?

Ford: Yes eventually I stayed and the last two days that were left they wanted to send home my close friend Ajani and I said well if he was being sent home I would leave too. As I was packing to leave the teachers came and said that Ajani was already gone and there were only two days left so just hold on and Ajani also called me to say don't come home, stay.

Moderator: Did you get a certificate or something?

Ford: Yes and a little job experience at Hope Gardens.

Moderator: How was that?

Ford: That was hard!

Moderator: Really?

Ford: Yes and it was because of friends too. I was placed at Hope Gardens with some guys who looked up to me.

Moderator: Really? Why do you say it was hard? What sort of things did they give you to do at Hope Gardens?

Ford: You had to go into the green house and count flowers and write down their names. It was a very large number of flowers that had to be sorted. You did different things on different days; for example, we would have to check on the animal cages. It was hard man.

Moderator: Did you finish the work though or did you leave early?

Ford: I finished it but I didn't want them to call me with a permanent job.

Moderator: What happened after Hope Gardens?

Ford: Well I was at home for a little while and then they came with this school thing. Anyway, after camp I got a girl pregnant so I became a Dad now; therefore, things have to improve because it's the policy to take care of your children as no one else should do that for you. I started working with my cousin at LOJ Towers for about a year then they came with the school thing.

Moderator: CSJP came with the school thing? Was this via Heart?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: So then you went and started that?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: Are you doing it now?

Ford: No I went into the food preparation part

Moderator: Yes? Do you cook well?

Ford: Yes man

Moderator: What level did you reach?

Ford: Level 1

Moderator: What happened?

Ford: Friends again! I was trying to help out a friend and couldn't finish up Level 2. I came out of Level 2 and joined the community reading class

Moderator: Why did you leave before completing Level 2? Couldn't you do both?

Ford: I want to go back to Level 2 and even go further because I like it

Moderator: Are you on the reading programme now?

Ford: yeah

Moderator: How is that helping?

Ford: It helps me a lot man.

Moderator: Are you working at the same time?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: Where do you work?

Ford: Well, I have a little part-time job and its not like 2 or 3 days per week but 2 or 3 days per month.

Moderator: And then the rest of the time you go to school?

Ford: Not now. They say school will resume in September

Moderator: It seems to me that because of your friends you stop many things. Tell me about that. What you they tell you?

Ford: They don't tell me anything. But if I see where I can help, I do; for example, I help those who don't read as well as I do

Moderator: Oh but that's in the class

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: But you said that friends stopped you from doing Level two so I want to know how they prevented you?

Ford: Because of the same reading thing again I was often there helping them

Moderator: Oh, so you help them instead of continuing with your course.

Ford: And also Level Two, I wasn't so prepared for it as I needed a little more reading

Moderator: Some more preparation?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: Ok tell me now about the role CSJP has had. If you think about the benefits to you, tell me all the ways you have benefited.

Ford: CSJP is one of the best things that ever happened to me and I can say that for me and any other person who had been in CSJP's programmes.

Moderator: In what ways has CSJP been the best thing?

Ford: Keeps you out of trouble and take care of you.

Moderator: How do they take care of you?

Ford: For instance, if the police holds you, you can call on CSJP. You know how it is, the police will come in at any time and drop a curfew and no matter how innocent you are you can get caught in it.

CSJP also sends you to school, work experience, or camp and when you are going to school you get a little stipend. So if they reopen the school right now you will find 1000 young people ready to go. It's the best youth programme CSJP.

Moderator: Do you know of any other youth programmes in the community?

Ford: Yes there are many others there

Moderator: What makes CSJP the best one?

Ford: As I told you CSJP takes care of you

Moderator: Do they have a personal relationship with you? You seem to know Ms. Adams well.

Ford: Yes man

Moderator: So is that a part of it? How they personalize it?

Ford: Yes. Any little thing that happens, Ms. Adams will call you and say "Ford make sure you not doing anything you know" and I would say "no". People tend to judge me as being vile but I am not. I will defend myself. But to just come to a man like that, no not me.

Moderator: So you don't break to inhouses?

Ford: No I have never done that. No form of stealing at all.

Moderator: Just hustle?

Ford: Just hustle

Moderator: You said that when you look around the community you realized that some go to school and some do not. When did you realize that you should be in school?

Ford: Everyday I say I am sorry that I didn't go to school and get my education and so something better for myself.

Moderator: I am wondering what can be done for the younger ones on the corner. How can we reach them early? What do we need to do?

Ford: A job. If a man has a job, his mind is focused on his job. Youth only focus on certain things. The friends I have are not bad people; they are good people

Moderator: They just need a second chance.

Ford: Just a second chance

Moderator: Tell me, if you give the youth a second chance but you don't focus on the family do you think there will be a gap?

Ford: Yes, that is a good focus because if young persons are being helped, they are going to want to help their family

Moderator: How would you try to make the programme reach more people and help you more?

Ford: Just work and having them in a programme maybe every end of month to keep the focus.

Moderator: Therefore working and going to school?

Ford: Yes or if they are not working, just have a programme for the youth.

Moderator: A lot of young people seem to have suffered all types of abuse. Did you do the counseling?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: Did it help you?

Ford: Yes man. It takes your mind off of certain things like death

Moderator: Did anyone in your family die? anybody for you died? Your father died, right?

Ford: And my last two brothers

Moderator: Did they die in violecne?

Ford: One got hit by a chi chi bus and the other had a heart problem about a year now

Moderator: Have you had friends who died?

Ford: Yes and family members died by gunshot. People have been shot right beside me.

Moderator: So people have been beside you and died beside you?

Ford: The last time when I was a little boy I woke up and went to brush my teeth on a Saturday morning and a man shot another man in the head right beside me and I ran off and all I remember was that a man got shot in the head.

Moderator: How do you deal with that though? I mean you must grow up very frightened.

Ford: Yes very frightened

Moderator: Are you still fearful? How do you see death now?

Ford: Well I don't fear death. If it comes it comes but I won't go to it.

Moderator: What is the average age for youth to die in your community?

Ford: Men die. My community is successful to where no young boy is allowed to fire a gun. They are sent inside to their homes after certain hours. So there are no little boys with guns in Federal.

Moderator: So people don't die as regularly as in other communities?

Ford: Federal is a principled place: no house is broken into; no one steals

Moderator: Why is Federal is so different? Is it because of who is in charge?

Ford: Yes, the men set the standard and the youths grow into it. You are not to steal or grudge anyone for what they have.

Moderator: Is there a don in Federal?

Ford: Right now?

Moderator: Yes

Ford: No, every man for himself right now because men have become afraid of the police.

Moderator: So no one is owning up even if is the don?

Ford: Yeah even the don is saying that he is not the don anymore

Moderator: (laughter)

Ford: If something happens and you to go him he will now send you to the police. If something happens the don is the target for the police so all dons get restricted now.

Moderator: Thus the order then, was it like the old time area leaders?

Ford: Yes in those times men were dons

Moderator: And people just continue to live by the same principles?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: Do you think it will change?

Ford: I don't think so because the community is a family community with several family yards and the various families will war against each other

Moderator: Is there a lot of family discord?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: When I am talking to the young people no one tells me about, you told me how things are, but people tend to focus on the community and on the family. Tell me about the economy and the politics, do you feel it affects you a lot?

Ford: Not really you know. My community is the only one where if you want to vote you go and vote; no one tells you how to vote. However, in a way the whole area was Labourite and they were saying this Seaga thing. Then the Tivoli men abused people; they raped a lot of them. They would just attend a dance and take any girl they wanted and they were also raped. So eventually they switched from Labourite to PNP and that caused a big war: the Rema and Tivoli war. A lot of people died. Every week it was a funeral and in those times I feared death because you saw too many dead; too many caskets. Even when I would watch Crime Stop on TV and hear the police siren I would turn the TV off and go into my room and put the pillow over my head. I was seeing a lot of death and they were also showing death on TV. I wondered how it would feel to die and then I realized that when you are dead you don't have any feelings, so how are you going to feel when you die? So I just overcame that and I never used to look at the dead or go where they were but now I can look into the morgue where the plenty dead men are, touch dead people and all.

Moderator: Can you do that now?

Ford: Yeah

Moderator: Why is it that people don't really talk about the wider economics in Jamaica or the politics in Jamaica?

Ford: People think about it. They think more about what they would do is if they should achieve great things... in what ways they would try and help out others. Stil,l when some get success they 'hype' on you as a little youth. They would pass through the place with a girl and it's a hype thing, going to dance and 'flossing' throwing away money and me and my friends always say that that is not our thing. We party and work, we think about life

Moderator: Do you party a lot?

Ford: Yeah and think about work because all my friends are Dads

Moderator: Oh you all are fathers? But why do party so much?

Ford: Yeah, but I didn't say fathers, I said Dads. Father is someone who has a child and doesn't care after that but a Dad…

Moderator: Oh, that's how you see father? As someone who doesn't care?

Ford: Yeah but we are Dads because we take care of our youth and make sure they are alright.

Moderator: So is that a community thing again where you have to do that?

Ford: Yeah man. Take care of your child.

Moderator: So what happens if you don't do it?

Ford: Nothing happens but it's a policy to take care of the children because most of my friends don't know their fathers so we said we don't want the same for our child. We take care, making sure they eat and have clothes.

Moderator: Therefore, what you need now is jobs and more jobs with education together.

Ford: Yes

Moderator: Suppose you had that, what would you have wanted to become?

Ford: A pilot. That's what I am telling my son

Moderator: Let me ask you a hard question. Suppose they had a programme so someone like you could be a pilot instead of what you are doing now in food preparation. What would be needed to get you to where you wanted to go. How could they have designed the programme to get you to where you wanted to go to become a pilot?

Ford: I would not have the chance to go through pilot school etc

Moderator: Yes man you would still get to go to the school I am just wondering what a programme like CSJP could do?

Ford: Well the same thing man, send me to the pilot school

Moderator: Were you asked what you wanted to do?

Ford: Yes man they asked

Moderator: But you never said pilot?

Ford: No I thought that was out of it. I thought it was too late for that.

Moderator: Therefore, did you just choose from what they had available?

Ford: Yes and I really like the cooking thing.

Moderator: Is that how many young people think? That's its too late now?

Ford: Most likely yes. Most likely that's how it goes.

The End

LIFE STORY 10

Pseudonym: Charles

Age: 21 years

Date of Birth: February 8, 1991

Community: Nannyville Gardens

Siblings: 2 brother and 3 sisters. Charles is the only child for his mother and father (together); all other siblings have different fathers. His mother and father do not co-habit. Currently, Charles fluctuates between both.

Education: Charles' mother finished high school; he is unsure of her educational attainment. Charles' father finished high school and has some subjects. Charles' mother is studying nursing while his father does construction.

Household: All children, except one, live with his mother. He has one brother in New York.

Charles has not been immune to the dislocation that occurs in many families; however, his parents have managed their separation in a way that has not had a lasting negative impact on him. Both participate in his life, contributing financially to the extent that they can but also motivating him enormously. Consequently, Charles has a healthy self-image. He is self-motivated and attributes this to his 'hybrid' spiritual principles.

It is noteworthy that, from Charles' account, the community of Nannyville has been supportive. From his account, his peers and elders do not discourage and resent him, as appears to occur in some inner-city communities. This context offers him an added advantage.

Charles regards CSJP as having a major role in his life and "bridging the gap" "between doing well in high school and sitting down like others in community". His parents have fostered a vision that other brilliant young people in his community appear to lack (believing instead that after high school, the only recourse is to seek immediate employment); CSJP has made his huge dreams feasible. Like others, Charles feels reinforced by the "personal touch" that CSJP offers, which also helps to motivate him. He has benefited directly from funding. The requirement for community service has also helped to foster his sense of civic responsibility and, accordingly, his desire to provide medical service to his community at the end of his studies.

Charles' story is one of exemplary fortitude. He reckons that CSJP will need to work through community and group leaders in order to reach similarly promising youth who are not aware of the programme or of the wide range of opportunities that are open to them. His father, having travelled, has shown him the possibilities. This

information sharing and encouragement of a broader, transformative, vision is an added component that CSJP could prioritize.

Moderator: Did your mother and father ever live together?

Charles: Yes, they lived together once.

Moderator: Was this a long time ago?

Charles: Yes, that was a long time ago.

Moderator: Did they separate thereafter?

Charles: Yes

Moderator: How did that affect you? Did it affect you at all?

Charles : It never affected me at all because they came to an agreement and they worked together to see that everything was going well with me.

Moderator: Did they both support you a lot?

Charles: Yes, where they could.

Moderator: Tell me where they could and where they couldn't.

Charles: Well, in terms of my physical well-being, food and shelter well they could support there but in terms of schooling, tuition and so on they did not have the capacity to help me at all.

Moderator: Not at all?

Charles: Not at all

Moderator: You are very young. Which primary school did you attend?

Charles: I used to attend the Norman Gardens Primary and Junior High.

Moderator: And how did you do there?

Charles: I did well there. I came first in class most of the time

Moderator: Really

Charles: It was only on one occasion that I didn't come first and I cried and cried

Moderator: So you were very bright

Charles: Yes man, very brilliant; that's what my colleagues would say

Moderator: How did you fit into the school? Were you seen as brilliant and, therefore, an outsider or were you accepted?

Charles: Repeat?

Moderator: Were you seen as brilliant and, therefore, an outsider or were you accepted?

Charles: No, I was accepted because I integrated with everybody. I played here; I was here, there and participated in a lot of activities for the school. I was involved in primary school festivals and all those things

Moderator: What other activities were you involved in? Were you involved in Speech and so on?

Charles: I was in Spelling and Mathematics competitions. That's academics but I was in culture shows and we did folklore songs and dances like Kumina

Moderator: Oh, you were in that?

Charles: Yes

Moderator: And then you went to high school. Which high school did you attend?

Charles: Camperdown

Moderator: And how did you do there?

Charles: Well, at Camperdown, I did exceptionally well.

Moderator: Really. How were your grades?

Charles: My grades were good. I was always first in my class

Moderator: Who pushed you? Did you push yourself or did your parents push you?

Charles: Well, for my parents doing well was the norm and so they always expected me to do well but really sometimes I wonder who pushed me. Maybe it's an inner being inside me

Moderator: Tell me more about the inner being

Charles: Well, I think it's an inner being inside me that doesn't know how to fail. I just always strive for the best. There were times when my mother would say there's no money to go to school so stay home and I would take up the initiative and walk to school.

Moderator: Really, you would walk to school without food to eat?

Charles: Yes, because I had support at school too. I had teachers and a guidance counselor who knew about my situation. Sometimes I had support from the principal too; I was her boy sand he took care of me. Most of the time I think I just loved school because of the sports and all those things. But in order to participate in the school's sporting activities you had to be at a certain level in your educational performance. That also pushed me to do well. Just growing up doing sports and wanting to play Manning Cup every year caused me to get higher grades. As I grew up, I saw that I was attending school for academics.

Moderator: But in Nannyville Gardens, is this the norm? Your type of performance, is it the norm? What do you see around you?

Charles: Well, all around me, I see a lot of talented youth within the community, talented and also brilliant. However, when they finish CXC, I don't know what happens to them

Moderator: What do you think happens to them… because you have been there for a long time?

Charles: Maybe it's the distractions or maybe they don't know that there is school after high school because traditionally it's the norm for a student who finishes high school for their parents say "Oh you need to go to work now", turning the blind eye on the University so they have decreased ability to make money because they stopped from school early. What makes me different is that at Camperdown I have friends in the school who had sisters who were doctors and so they know about University and they introduced me. That's how I even got to sign up for UWI.

Moderator: You signed up on your own initiative?

Charles: Yes, I signed up on my own initiative. I just saw one of my friends signing up and I asked him what he was doing. He was signing up for Medicine and I said since we do the same classes and subjects I would sign up with him, just walking in faith and not knowing how the tuition would be paid. However, my dad is always pushing me

Moderator: Do you get more encouragement from your father than your mother?

Charles: Well the thing is that I lived without my father for a very long time. My father came back to Jamaica when I was grown or growing and he saw that he could make an input and make things better for me; he really pushed me a lot. So I got pushed from my mother from I was younger but not really a push like do your homework, do this, do that because I always did those things. She just mad sure that I went to school but my father showed me the different paths that I can travel in life to be successful. At first, talking to

him, I wanted to become an Electrical Engineer then that changed and I wanted to become a medical student; I wanted to become a doctor.

Moderator: So you got the grades to get into medical school

Charles: Yes

Moderator: Which were?

Charles: Let me see if I can remember

Moderator: How long have you been in medical school?

Charles: This is my third year

Moderator: Oh really, you are 21

Charles: Very young doctor I will be

Moderator: Yes, so you only have a few more years

Charles: This is just the beginning of my third year

Moderator: Okay, alright.

Charles: I did Natural Science, Math, English and History

Moderators: That's what you did at "A" levels

Charles: That was the CSEC and, at the A Levels, I did Natural Science and Math along with Communication Studies and Caribbean Studies. I don't really remember my grades but I know I got in

Moderator: Therefore, you got into medicine without the money to pay the tuition for it

Charles: It was just one day when I was checking the internet, after high school finished in the summer, that I started to think about what I was going to do in September. In Medicine, you don't get accepted until late in August so I never really knew what to do. I decided that I was going to go the Harbour View Football Club and play in the DaCosta cup, right. I would normally check the internet, Facebook, my email and one day I just got lucky to see I got accepted in Medicine. I was happy until when I read the second part of the email, which stated that I got accepted in the non- government sponsored part of the school, paying 2.3 million dollars

Moderator: Is this per year?

Charles: Yes per year; per year. I told my Dad and Mom… both of them didn't know what to do but they always say put God first and move forward in faith and

that is when I went to the club president. I am in a club in Nannyville: the Nannyville Youth Uprising Action Club. The President is Ms. Samantha Dennis; she works here at CSJP. I went up to her about 11 o'clock in the night to tell her and then she told me about CSJP. She got me to apply and that's why I

Moderator: Tell me the name of the club again, Nannyville Youth…

Charles: Nannyville Youth Uprising Action Club

Moderator: So she told you about CSJP and then did CSJP funded you through all of it

Charles: Yes, they basically funded me through all of it. In the first year, I got a little help from Camperdown but basically it is just CSJP alone. Even last year, last semester, UWI was deregistering students. If you owe anything above $2000 they deregistered you and I owed about $36,000 after CSJP had helped me. I was looking through different avenues to pay it but it didn't work out and so I had to come back to CSJP to ask for extra assistance because it was in the exam period. Exam was a week away and I wouldn't get to do my exam if I didn't get that money

Moderator: How, then, would you qualify the role that CSJP has had in your life?

Charles: CSJP has had a major role. CSJP is the bridging gap between me just being a student who did well in high school and just sit down like the rest in the community. It is the bridging gap between that and becoming a doctor. CSJP has bridged the financial barriers. I think you have a financial barrier in almost every youth's life in the innercity. They are very brilliant but they cannot afford school, which is very unfortunate.

Moderator: Is this the only way that you participate in CSJP? Do you participate in any of the other programmes?

Charles: Well you have community programmes and stuff that you have to do as a scholarship recipient so I do that in my community and I also do voluntary work. Sometimes because Medicine is so stressful and time consuming I can't get to go back in my community but I do it in other communities like August Town, which is near UWI. I teach them computer literacy. I do some voluntary work at the Golden Age home; that is, the one in Portmore.

Moderator: Has this helped to develop that civic part of you or did you have this attitude before?

Charles: Well I did before but the more you live, the more experience you get and it's the more development (self)

Moderator: You said this has helped in terms of your civic responsibilities. Are there any other benefits? Are there other gains from CSJP?

Charles: Any other than financial help?

Moderator: And the civic benefits? Are there other indirect benefits for you and your family?

Charles: No that's everything. I could engage in more activities with CSJP if I had the time but being a UWI student it's so hard to be here and there

Moderator: Let me go back and ask you about the inner motivation. Is it spiritual?

Charles: I think it is spiritual, spiritual DNA in my soul.

Moderator: Are your parents Christian?

Charles: Yes, my mom, she believes in Christianity but my dad is more of a hybrid because he reads the Bible and stuff but he is more of a hybrid between Christianity and Rastafarianism. He just believes in a supreme being and stars and all of those things.

Moderator: What about your spirituality? What are your beliefs?

Charles: Well I grew up going to church but I see certain things and figure out certain things for myself and I believe I am a hybrid myself between Rastafarianism and Christianity. Maybe I am building my own religion. Because there are things that I take from both and sometimes I believe that they are the same religion but different messengers to come and convey the message. Selassie I was a messenger and Jesus Christ was a messenger

Moderator: I am wondering because you have been able to---granted that you are quite brilliant --- you have been able to navigate Nannyville Gardens and all sorts of different challenges that some youth would not navigate. I am wondering what caused you to see a different course. Did your parents open that up for you? For example, did your father because of his travels help you to see that there is a bigger world? I am just trying to understand what caused you to know that you can do these things

Charles: Well my father opened up to me and showed me that there is a bigger world out there. My mom always pushed me as well; she always tells me I can do it. Even before I wanted to become a doctor she said she always dreamt of me becoming a doctor and I always say "Mommy stop that. I am going to become an Engineer; that's where my heart is " but what the Supreme Being chooses for you is what you are going to become.

Moderator: But you can decide not to follow it. So what sort of challenges do you face?

Charles: Challenges … I don't really see it as challenges. The thing is, I am a person who doesn't really make anything bother me. If they are gunshots firing here or there; that won't stop me from studying. I don't make things of life---like socially or what's happening around me---bother me. Challenges now: Living on campus is sometimes it is rough, particularly providing food but my Mom and Dad they help with that. However, I always try for myself. I don't like pressuring them so I seek jobs on campus

Moderator: Okay

Charles: That's the most challenging part and going to school… becoming a doctor

Moderator: Yes that in itself. Many of the young people I have spoken to…I have spoken to about 10 sets now, including some families and nobody has mentioned how the wider context, such as the problem with economics in the country as a challenge or the social problems as a challenge. You come from Nannyville Gardens and you are going to school at UWI in the medical faculty that is predominantly of a higher or different class in a sense, is that correct?

Charles: Yes

Moderator: How did you fit into that? Was that a challenge for you or is that you just don't care about things like that?

Charles: Alright. It wasn't a challenge to me because I always look at myself as a big shot, which is why nobody sees that. I always look at myself and say anything they can do I can do once you have equal opportunity, so if you are the uptown class and the class is predominantly uptown right…you see…uptown and thing, that is not going to frighten me or shut me away from UWI …because we get equal opportunity

Moderator: Is that the norm in your club for guys to think that way?

Charles: Well most of my colleagues think that way

Moderator: Really?

Charles: Yes, most of my colleagues think that way but maybe they are not as brilliant as I am so they don't get to reach a certain level as I am now

Moderator: Do you think Nannyville is somewhat different from many other innercity communities because in many innercity communities, when you talk about these issues the guys are willing to sit on the corner; they are not willing to try. Many don't see themselves as progressive. You are describing a different context in Nannyville or is it your friends who are different?

Charles; In Nannyville, you have a lot of those boys that they call corner boys, even some of my friends but the thing is I have a lot of leadership qualities and I am very influential so I always influence them to go to school and to try again. For example, some of my friends who have finished high school and who are sitting down and not doing anything, I influence them. There are about two or three of them I know who are going to Exced. The thing is that the other people on the corner who are too old for school, they are always just wishing me the best.

Moderator: Oh, they still wish you the best?

Charles: If I go visiting one day and go on the corner they would say: "You have to hurry up go back to UWI. You have to study and become the doctor so that you can come take care of us"; that is just their notion

Moderator: Is that what you would do though?

Charles: Yes man. I always do that; I give back to my community

Moderator: And this is different too because many of the persons I interview say their community don't wish them the best

Charles: Well my community always wishes me the best. When I pass to go down to my house they always look at me and the elders ask me how I am doing or how is school. They tell me to hurry because their feet are hurting and so on. Even the younger ones wish me the best. They actually want to become like me, which is a good thing.

Moderator: Well you seem satisfied with have and how you have gained from CSJP. How can CSJP meet some of the more difficult to reach youth in your community?

Charles: Well, first of all, I think there is a lot of youth in the community who don't know about CSJP. What initiative can CSJP take? They can approach either the community leaders or group leaders and give them a talk in which they scout out the youth in the community who want to enhance their education but don't have sufficient funding. You can have community leaders scout them out and lead them to CSJP to apply for a scholarship.

Moderator: Also, a lot of youth don't seem to have your family background. With parental separation, they don't see their fathers at all. I guess there was a period when you didn't see your father but managed…

Charles: The thing is that my dad always calls

Moderator: So even if you didn't see him, he still made contact?

Charles: Yes. I remember on Fridays and Saturdays he would call and that's my spelling test. He would call me and give me words to spell and words to study. He would give my mother words and he would say: "Let him do this" and "Let him do that" and then he would quiz me over the phone. For years, he has done that.

Moderator: So, in a sense, their own responsibility, the way they handled it has helped to settle you and so even though they have separated, they have done it in a way that doesn't destabilize you

Charles: It didn't destabilize me. I'm not sure that if it were a different person it would have been the same result

Moderator: Given the way you seem to be?

Charles: Yes

Moderator: Okay. Is there anything at all that destabilizes you?

Charles: Destabilizes me?

Moderator: Yes or that can destabilize you...

Charles: Well, I don't see anything yet. I don't think...
When you say 'destabilize', I wonder if you mean things that can stop me from focusing on school...

Moderator: Yes

Charles: Nada, none, nothing can stop me from being what I want to be; nothing.

Moderator: Have I covered all your life...missing anything?

Charles: Well, you can't cover all my life but what you have got sufficient information (laughter)

Moderator: Have you ever seen anybody die?

Charles: Yes

Moderator: Was this beside you or close to you?

Charles: Yes

Moderator: And how did that affect you? About what age did that happen?

Charles: Very young like about...its more than once. In Nannyville, I remember I was about 13, walking up the lane that leads to a bigger road; the lane was vertical and the bigger road horizontal and I just saw a man just drop

Moderator: And what you did do? Did you run?

Charles: Well, yes, I ran go back down to my house

Moderator: Were you traumatized by this?

Charles: I remember crying for a little while but I wouldn't say traumatized, such as having a post-traumatic stress disorder

Moderator: Well have you ever had to go to counseling or anything like that?

Charles: Like go to counseling

Moderator: Yes

Charles: No. I am a very self-motivated person so if I have a problem or if I am not doing well or something I always deal with it before it gets too bad and then once you see the problem for yourself and agree that yes that' s the problem, it's easier for you to eradicate the problem

Moderator: Let me ask you one more thing. There are many development programmes and a couple of persons have mentioned the personal contact that CSJP offers. Do they call to see if you're okay?

Charles: Well I am very close to Ms. Denise Adams and Samantha Henry who works down here so they always keep checking on me

Moderator: Does that help?

Charles: Yes it helps because once in a while everybody needs a little emotional encouragement

Moderator: Even you? (Laughter)

Charles: Yes, well most times I get that from my dad. He would text me and say "How are you doing Dr. D.T Thomas?" and so forth

Moderator: It seems like you have had a good network around you. That's good. It appears that sometimes that network stabilizes you and pushes you

Charles: Yes, my personality also helps. I am a people person so I'm here and I'm there. When I go into a new environment, it's just a matter of time for somebody to look at me and say he's leading or he's very influential and so on and so forth and that happens on Chancellor Hall

Moderator: Well maybe it's Irvine you should have chosen; that's a step down (Joking)

Charles: No man, that's a step up, people from Chancellor Hall always become big. Its where the leaders come from. Do you notice the Prime Minister? Do you

notice how many Prime Ministers come from Chancellor Hall? Do you notice the Guild?

Moderator: So you're happy with Chancellor and you have breathing room at Chancellor?

Charles: Yes man

Moderator: How are you going to inspire the young people in your community? You did say you already inspire them.

Charles: I am already inspiring them. Just to strive for excellence alone is currently inspiring them. The better I do at school and the better the outcome is the better I have an influence on them

THE END