

# Man-box: Men and Masculinity in Jamaica

Gender and Diversity Division

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TECHNICAL  
NOTE N°  
IDB-TN-02121

Editor:  
Leslie Hunter

March 2021

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Cataloging-in-Publication data provided by the  
Inter-American Development Bank  
Felipe Herrera Library  
Levtov, Ruti.

Man-box: men and masculinity in Jamaica / Ruti Levtov, Laurence Telson; editor, Leslie Hunter.

p. cm. — (IDB Technical Note ; 2121)

Includes bibliographic references.

1. Masculinity-Social aspects-Jamaica. 2. Men-Education-Jamaica. 3. Men-Employment-Jamaica. I. Telson, Laurence. II. Hunter, Leslie, editor. III. Inter-American Development Bank. Gender and Diversity Division. IV. Title. V. Series. IDB-TN-2121

JEL Codes: J16, D91

Keywords: Gender; Masculinity; Behaviors; Decision-making; Jamaica

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## ACRONYMS

CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate
ESSJ	Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica
IDB	Inter- American Development Bank
JMD	Jamaica Dollar
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UWI	University of the West Indies
WEF	World Economic Forum

## **ABSTRACT**

The findings of the Man Box Jamaica study highlight that the Man Box—a set of socially reinforced rules about what “real men” should do—is alive and well in Jamaica. Being inside the Man Box causes young men and others around them real harm, specifically in terms of violence and mental health. Men who live inside the Man Box appear to feel significantly less in control of their lives—in terms of both everyday activities and larger life decisions. Not expressing emotions and being self-reliant are core elements of the Man Box’s pillars of perceived self-sufficiency and toughness. Consistent with previous Man Box studies conducted elsewhere, the findings show that young men in Jamaica reap certain benefits from staying inside the Man Box: it provides them with a sense of belonging and of living up to what is expected of them. However, when those same norms tell men to be aggressive all the time and to repress emotions, the Man Box demands that they pretend to be someone they are not, and the resulting life can be violent and isolating.

## INTRODUCTION

**Human lives are shaped by rules about how men and women are supposed to be: our ideas, choices, preferences, and behaviors.** Today, we more deeply understand that gender and sexual identities express themselves across a fluid spectrum rather than a rigid binary. We are increasingly aware that who we are and how we act are shaped not just by gender but also by other parts of identity and experience, be they culture, upbringing, social class, race, or ethnicity. Yet, these diverse, intersectional identities are often in conflict with the culturally expected and appropriate rules of behavior for boys and girls early in life, and as men and women later in adulthood. We know now that these socially dictated rules of behavior for boys and girls, and women and men, can have lifelong harmful effects. For men in particular, global studies have shown that specific ideas, norms, and personal attitudes about what it means to be a man are closely linked to expressed behaviors, such as health service-seeking behaviors, caregiving and parenting, and sexual and reproductive health (Ragonese, Shand and Baker, 2019).

**Masculinity in the Caribbean context is a complex construct which ignores the historical influences, stigmas, repressions, isolation and public derision of slavery.** Beckles (1996) suggests that slavery marginalized and alienated men and assigned to them ideological characteristics. The legacy of slavery overshadows and lingers in the current discourse and manifestations of gender identity and masculinity in the Caribbean.

**In Jamaican and Caribbean society, gender stereotypes and masculinities are perpetuated through popular culture, especially music.** Similarly, the Jamaican dance hall and reggae culture have highlighted the societal malaise and perceptions around class and identity, exhibited for example in exclusion from employment and services, on account of a 'wrong address' as in inner city or marginalized communities.<sup>1</sup> The cultural and historical antecedents are important underpinnings to framing and understanding masculinities in Jamaica.

**Young men are acculturated and groomed in social, political, economic and community spaces on the defined margins of socially accepted gender identities and the dictates of masculinities within these confines.** Understanding what it means to be a young man and the

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<sup>1</sup> Jamaican Reggae artists Etana, "Wrong Address" and Robert Nesta Marley, "Trench Town" highlights the perceptions and identifiers affixed to communities and subliminally stereotypes.

concomitant actions, expectations and thought processes holds merit to inform policy across different spheres of Jamaican society.

**The “Man Box” study has been adapted to better understand the experiences of young Jamaican men in navigating the existing social expectations and pressures coming from peers, families, communities and other social contexts.** The Man Box, a term first coined by Paul Kivel and the Oakland Men’s Project (Kivel, 1992), refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by peers, families, and the media, that place pressure on men to be and behave a certain way. For men, social rules and pressures often dictate that they should be self-sufficient, act tough, be physically attractive, be heterosexual, have sexual prowess, and use aggression to resolve conflicts. These social pressures in turn contain men in an expected version of the Man Box, rather than recognizing that men live and express themselves through multiple ways and identities.

**The first Man Box report explored men’s lived experiences of masculinities in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Mexico ( (Heilman, Barker, & Harrison, 2017)).** As a research concept, the original Man Box study aimed to measure how young men in different contexts encounter social, external messages and subsequently internalize them.

**This current study adapted the original Man Box survey to the Jamaican context.** Using social media, we collected data from 1,001 young Jamaican men ages 18–30 to answer the following research questions: (1) Do young men agree with rigid ideas and norms about what makes a “real man”? (2) Do these ideas matter for young men’s lives or for the lives of those around them?

**This report shares the findings of the first adaptation of the Man Box study through the lens of young Jamaican men.** In the next section, the rationale for the study is outlined and this is followed by a description of the research methodology. Section four present the sample characteristics. The study findings are discussed in section five and this is followed with an analysis on the adherence of young men in Jamaica to the gender rules and the influences on masculinities. The final section concludes the report and suggests policy actions with a focus on the educational and economic spheres.

## RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

### **The Man Box study comes at a critical time for Jamaica's current socio-economic context.**

On March 10, 2020, Jamaica recorded its first case of the coronavirus, which prompted authorities to initiate measures aimed at stopping the spread of the virus. The consequences of COVID-19 will be lingering until Jamaica, a tourism-dependent country, can recoup revenue losses, reverse unemployment and realize growth in the economy. Data gathered from an online survey carried out in April 2020 reveal that about 60 percent of low-income households reported a member having lost employment, and more than one-third of respondents from economically vulnerable households had gone hungry in the week prior to the survey (IDB, 2020).

### **The social impacts of the restrictive measures from the pandemic are also significant.**

Confinement has exacerbated domestic violence, causing a shadow epidemic in line with the pandemic. Isolated, anxious, and stressed, potential abusers who find themselves without an outlet may become more aggressive. The online IDB survey cited above documented an increase in domestic violence measured by women's direct report. Children who reside in households where there is intimate partner violence are seven times more likely to experience abuse (UN Women, 2018)).

**Young men who are less likely to perform well academically are at risk of dropping out of school, further swelling the ranks of youth who are not in education, in employment or in training.** The gender differences in schooling and achievement are observed in the education components of the Human Capital Index and regional examinations. The expected years of schooling for girls in Jamaica is 11.6 years compared to 11.2 years for boys, once adjusted for educational achievement, the reported learning adjusted years of schooling for girls drops to 7.5 years and boys to 6.7 years (World Bank 2020). Attainment on harmonized test scores is higher for girls (404) than boys (372) (World Bank, 2020). Data on participation in the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) identifies a 17-percentage point and 23 percentage point difference in subject entries in favor of girls, respectively (CXC, 2020).

**Gender equality is improving but challenges persist.** The latest World Economic Forum report ranks Jamaica 41st out of 153 countries on gender equality (WEF, 2019). Despite universal

primary education, educational gender gaps widen as students reach secondary schooling. The disparity is particularly striking for young men. They enroll in secondary and tertiary university education levels in much lower numbers than young women (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2015). At the secondary school level, girls significantly outperform boys on almost every subject<sup>2</sup> and, consequently are more likely to enroll in tertiary education. Women represent 69 percent of the student body at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus in 2019, at the overall tertiary level 64.7 percent of students are females (PIOJ, 2020).<sup>3</sup> Yet, even though women outperform men in education, the same is not true for the labor market. Women in Jamaica report on average more years of schooling than men (13.9 versus 12.4 years in 2018),<sup>4</sup> while the difference in employment rate is more than ten percentage points in favor of men. Data from the UNDP show that women report an income of US\$6406 in purchasing power parity (PPP) per year of schooling versus men who earn US\$9090 in PPP.<sup>5</sup> As such, women would need an average of three years of additional schooling to achieve the same PPP as men. Further, while women's employment rates are growing, males outnumbered females in the private sector; the 2018 economic and social survey of Jamaica (ESSJ) indicates that 66.0 per cent of "Unpaid Workers" are women.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, despite demonstrable numerical and skill advantages, women are unable to command a fair and equitable position in the formal labor market.

**Within the Caribbean context, boys' lower academic achievement has been theorized through gender and post-colonial lenses**, as well as debated extensively in the public sphere. More recently, some have argued for exploring the "gendered patterns" in educational outcomes, in order to fully understand the gendered influences affecting educational outcomes (IDB, 2019). Accordingly, the underperformance of young men in schooling is not universal as implied by "male academic underachievement," and it varies across structural context and socio-demographic characteristics. Research shows that men who underperform in school come from both

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<sup>2</sup> Girls outperformed boys in every subject except biology and chemistry on the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) exams in 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Unequal gender preferences and the characteristics of the Jamaican economy play in favor of men. Although women generally have higher levels of educational attainment than men, they account for 59.9 per cent of the unemployed labor force.

<sup>4</sup> The difference in employment rate is more than 10 percentage points in favor of men.

<sup>5</sup> Based on data retrieved from UNDP. Human Development Index.

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/estimated-gni-capita-ppp-male-constant-2011-ppp>. Last accessed: 28 February 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Planning Institute of Jamaica. 2019. Economic and Social Survey 2018. Kingston, Jamaica.

educational- and resource-scarce contexts (and therefore have low access to quality education), and from lower socio-economic status family backgrounds (IDB, 2019).

**Gender differences in academic achievement, participation and learning opportunities have been extensively explained in the literature.** Studies have shown that socialization (expected attitudes and behaviors) contributes to gender differences in academic performance (Chevannes, 2001; Evans, 1999; Parry, 2000; Reddock, 2004). For instance, the specter of corporal punishment is stronger. Boys suffer more consistently and severely from home and school disciplinary practices, such as being beaten and verbally insulted, for the same infractions as girls. Jamaican law allows for the use of corporal punishment at home, in some day care settings and schools (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2020), despite research that has shown that corporal punishment, especially in school settings, is counterproductive to student success (Parry, 2000) and can lead to unintended consequences such as dislike for the teacher and school in general, as well as high levels of aggressiveness and poor educational performance. Further, boys actively and continuously construct a definition of themselves as uninterested in academic work (Parry, 2000). Parental attitudes that school is for girls and is unlikely to help a man in later life also play a role in cementing this perception (Chevannes, 2001). Chevannes (2001) argues that this may be a response to the potential rewards of work in traditional male jobs, such as Construction, Agriculture, and Wholesale and Retail, Repair of Motor Vehicle and Equipment, where wages are higher though educational requirement lower.<sup>7</sup>

**Critics have come to question the “male academic underachievement” thesis, pointing to the clear gender inequities and positions of power held by men in Jamaican society** (Bailey, 2004; IDB, 2019). Research suggests that women are much more likely to participate and perform better at higher levels of the Jamaican education system relative to their male counterparts. Yet men continue to hold power and dominate across most Jamaican social, economic and political spheres.

**Jamaica has experienced an escalation of interpersonal violence, accidents, and injuries, making these the leading causes of death, particularly amongst men in general.** Interpersonal violence is an important health problem in Jamaica. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> cause of death, the

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<sup>7</sup> In these sectors, the number of employed men without training (74.1 percent) compared with 25.9 percent of women (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2018).

3<sup>rd</sup> cause of premature death and the 4<sup>th</sup> cause of death and disability combined. Overall, injuries due to interpersonal violence account for 12 percent of Jamaica total budget and productivity losses due to violence-related injuries account for 16 percent of Jamaica total health expenditures (Harriot & Jones, 2016). Domestic violence is one of the main sources of violence in the country, although the lack of data to diagnose the extent of the problem is a constraint to design pertinent solutions. Recent research suggests an alarmingly high prevalence of violence against women in Jamaica. In 2008 approximately four percent of murders were a result of domestic violence, with women being the main victims of this type of violence. The Jamaica Women's Health Survey 2016 (UN Women, 2018) was the first report on the prevalence of violence experienced by women and perpetrated by men. It revealed that 27.8 percent of Jamaican women surveyed had experienced intimate physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime; 23 percent and 24 percent reported having been sexually abused and sexually harassed respectively by men other than their partners (UN Women, 2018).

**The current study on the behaviors and attitudes of young Jamaican men drills further into Jamaican masculine norms and identities—and the social pressures that keep men stuck in the Man Box**—and their relationship with educational, workforce, and violence experiences of young Jamaican men.

## METHODOLOGY

**An online survey involving 1,001 young men aged 18 to 30 was conducted between March and April 2019, forms the basis for this study.** The respondents were recruited through Facebook advertisements, which offered entry in a prize drawing for participating in the survey. Participants were between the ages of 18 and 30, had to self-identify as male, and be residing in Jamaica. Screened participants who fit the inclusion criteria completed a consent form informing them of the study's purpose and their rights as a participant, followed by the self-administered survey online. To recruit a more representative sample, specific sample quotas were included by age group and income. Specifically, participants aged 18–24 and 25–30 were enrolled, until the desired percentage of participants was reached for each age group (50 percent in each group). For income, an annual household income of 90,000 Jamaica Dollars (JMDs) was used to enroll

participants both over and under the threshold income (60 percent and 40 percent of sample, respectively).<sup>8</sup>

**The online survey included questions about demographic characteristics, gender attitudes, perceived pressures and social support, health behaviors, bullying and harassment, community participation, and educational trajectories.** It took approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey. The information was collected and compiled by KANTAR TNS, a data and consulting firm.

**The analyses explore the associations between the composite scores and scales constructed with these data and various behaviors and experiences.** It is purely a descriptive analysis, as the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow for the identification and attribution of causal relationships.

**Undertaking an online survey allowed for rapid and confidential data collection, but like all field methods, it had its limitations.** The recruitment through Facebook required internet access and a social media account, leading to a somewhat more educated sample than the general population. For example, 27 percent of the men in the study sample had tertiary education, compared to 20 percent in the general Jamaican population (UNESCO, 2015). The sample thus cannot be considered representative of the Jamaican male population aged 18–30. Moreover, higher educational attainment is well known to be related to having more positive gender attitudes and improved social, economic, and health outcomes (Pulerwitz & Baker, 2008). As a result, this study's more educated sample may have skewed the results toward more gender-equitable attitudes, as well as improved health behaviors.

## **SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS**

Table 1 provides a snapshot of demographic information about the individuals in the sample. Three in ten surveyed men have an associate degree or higher. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 30 years, with an average age of 24 years. Approximately four in ten men surveyed were single, and one in four reported having children. Over half the sample reported either being employed

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<sup>8</sup> US\$ 1.00 = JA\$ 124.70 rate for March 2019 available at [http://boj.org.jm/foreign\\_exchange/fx\\_historical\\_rates.php](http://boj.org.jm/foreign_exchange/fx_historical_rates.php)

full time or part time. Three in ten men reported having great difficulty meeting their financial needs. Relative to the country's male population, the survey overrepresents men in the 25-30-year cohort, employed men, and men with higher socioeconomic status (in terms of income and education levels).

Table 1: Characteristics of Study Sample and Jamaica Population

Characteristic	Study Sample (n=1,001) (percent)	Jamaica Population (year 2018) <sup>9</sup> (percent)
<b>Age group</b>		
18–24	51	61
25–30	49	39
<b>Relationship status</b>		
Single	44	59
Dating or in committed relationship	30	26*
Living with a partner, not married	15	12**
Currently married	7	3
<b>Has children</b>	25	n/a
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
No education or some primary education	1	0.1
Lower secondary (grades 7–11)	38	72
Upper secondary (grades 12–13)	9	3
Vocational / technical school	25	6
Tertiary education or higher (Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's or higher)	27	20
<b>Employment status</b>		
Employed full time	44	36
Employed part time	13	4
Unemployed	4	8
Student	15	12
Freelance/consultant/contractor	7	11
Looking for work	12	n/a
Other/ Not stated	3	1

<sup>9</sup> Jamaica population data can be found here: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/jm>

Characteristic	Study Sample (n=1,001) (percent)	Jamaica Population (year 2018) <sup>9</sup> (percent)
<b>Annual household income</b>		
Under JA\$90,000	60	66
Over JA\$90,000	40	34
<b>Household has great difficulty to meet its needs</b>	29	n/a

Note: Age and income were used as quota variables in recruiting the sample. n/a denotes not available.

As expected, given the modality of the survey, most men (95 percent) reported having mobile phones and a specific data and/or internet plan for their mobile phones (Table 2). Seventy percent of men reported having a computer, while 37 percent reported having a tablet with an internet connection. The variables in Table 2 confirm that the survey reached a segment of the population that is better-off than the average man in Jamaica.

Table 2 : Access and Use of Media by Study Sample and Jamaica Population

	Study Sample (n=1,001)	Jamaica Population
<b>Has Access to<sup>10</sup>:</b>	%	%
Mobile phone	95	96
Television	83	95
Data plan or internet for mobile phone	81	n/a
Computer / laptop with an internet connection	70	31
Radio	67	80
Tablet with an internet connection	37	14

Note: Respondents were able to select more than one answer.

## UNPACKING THE MAN BOX IN JAMAICA: STUDY FINDINGS

For the purposes of this study, men “in the Man Box” are those who most internalize beliefs and pressures to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to have sexual prowess, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts. Young

<sup>10</sup> Jamaica population data can be found here:  
<https://webstore.pioj.gov.jm/images/PreviewDocument/20262.pdf>

men “outside of the Man Box” are those who have embraced more positive ideas and attitudes about how men should believe and behave.

**To measure this Man Box construct, a scale was developed around seven thematic pillars.**<sup>11</sup> The messages in these pillars reflect what respondents may think a ‘real man’ should believe and/or how a real man should behave. The items inside each of the seven pillars are listed in Table 3. Each item was assessed in a Likert-type scale, where the most gender-inequitable answer (usually “strongly agree”) received one point and the most gender-equitable answer (usually “strongly disagree”) received four points; items were reverse coded as needed, such that a higher score reflected more equitable attitudes. A composite score was calculated for each respondent by averaging the mean score of his 19 item scores. This scoring scheme is designed to compare men within the same setting or country, rather than across countries.

**Table 3 shows the level of agreement of survey respondents with each of the items within a respective pillar.** While many rules about self-sufficiency and gender roles are rejected, indicating a more gender-equitable mindset, when it comes to opinions about sexual orientation, young men in Jamaica still appear to conform closely to less gender-equitable rules. About half of all respondents reported considering straight guys being friends with gay guys as abnormal; and more than a third reported that a homosexual man was not a ‘real man.’ Additionally, respondents also reported social norms that create pressure on them, with 68 percent reporting that their male peers would give them a hard time if they were seen hanging out with a person who appears to be homosexual.

*Table 3: Respondents’ Personal Agreement with the Man Box Rules (n=1,001)*

Respondents who agree or strongly agree with the following statements	%
<b>Pillar 1: Self sufficiency</b>	
A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears, and problems should not be respected.	7
Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.	12
<b>Pillar 2: Acting tough</b>	

<sup>11</sup> Six of the pillars are the same as in first Man Box study. This study excludes physical attractiveness and includes education and work as the replacement pillar.

Respondents who agree or strongly agree with the following statements	%
A man who does not fight back when others push him around is weak.	18
Men should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.	63
<b>Pillar 3: Rigid masculine gender roles</b>	
It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house and take care of younger children.	7
A man should not have to do household chores.	6
Men, not women, should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families.	28
<b>Pillar 4: Heterosexuality and homophobia</b>	
A homosexual/gay man is not a 'real man.'	36
Straight men being friends with homosexual/gay men is totally fine and normal. <sup>12</sup>	45
<b>Pillar 5: Hypersexuality</b>	
A real man should have as many sexual partners as he can.	4
A real man would never say no to sex.	10
<b>Pillar 6: Aggression and control</b>	
Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.	3
A man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.	15
If a man has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.	44
<b>Pillar 7. Education and work</b>	
Men are better suited for managerial positions than women.	15
Work that men do should be paid more than work that women do.	12
Boys who apply themselves in school are not manly.	4
Men shouldn't try too hard at school.	4
In my opinion, a man who focuses too much on getting good grades is a loser.	2

## Social Expectations of Manhood in Jamaica

Attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be a man are often influenced by external social and structural expectations of manhood. In Jamaica, both social pressures about

<sup>12</sup> This item was reverse coded for inclusion in the Man Box scale, to match the direction of the other statements, where higher scores indicate more equitable attitudes.

manhood and expectations about education appear to play a role about who a ‘real man’ ought to be.

**To better understand men’s experiences of social expectations and pressures, we asked the young men if they perceived that they had received clear messages about what was expected of them as men.** About four-fifths of men—87 percent—said they were told that a ‘real man’ behaves in a certain way, and this was inculcated since childhood. As shown in Table 4, a significant number of respondents —70 percent—report that their parents taught them to hide feelings of nervousness or fear—in other words, to ‘tough it out.’

Table 4 : Social Pressures from Parents, Friends, and Family (n=1,001)

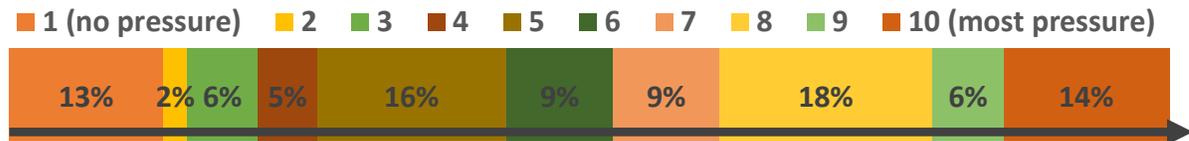
Respondents who agree or strongly agree that...	%
My parents taught me that a real man should act strong even if he feels nervous or scared.	70
My male friends would give me a hard time if they saw me hanging out with someone who is gay or who they think looks gay.	68
My partner definitely expects me to use violence to defend my reputation if I have to.	11

**When asked about who in their life pressured them the most, more than half the respondents reported feeling the most pressure about being a man from their parents or family members (54 percent),** followed by people in their neighborhood or town (32 percent), and their male peers (24 percent). About 11 percent of young Jamaican men reported experiencing similar pressures from their romantic partners. This finding underscores the observation that young men are not creating their rigid, harmful identities *on their own*. Rather, they internalize these restrictive messages from their families and communities. Moreover, they receive these messages from multiple influential sources and at different life stages, potentially reinforcing expectations and harmful behaviors throughout the course of their lives.

**On a scale of 1 to 10, men were asked about the role that social pressure has played in shaping them to be a certain kind of man today** (with 1 signifying no pressure and 10 meaning the most extreme amount of pressure). As illustrated in Figure 1, 14 percent of men reported that social pressure had an extreme amount of influence in shaping their manhood. A similar percentage, 13 percent, reported that it had no influence at all. Importantly, approximately half

the men ranked the influence of social pressure as being moderately to extremely high in shaping the kind of man they are today.

Figure 1: Respondents' Ranking of How Social Pressure Has Shaped Them to Be a Certain Kind of Man Today, on a Scale of 1 to 10 (n=987)



**We examined factors that may contribute to varying feelings of social pressures in defining respondents' identities as men.** The results suggest that men who have university-level education, as well as those who were employed full time, were significantly less likely to report that social pressure influenced them to be a certain type of man. At the same time, men with more harmful and inequitable beliefs about masculine norms—as highlighted in the seven pillars above—were significantly more likely to feel that strong social pressures shaped the man they are today.

#### When the Man Box Meets Reality: Masculinities, Education, and Work

Coupled with social pressures, men may experience other structural and socio-economic factors that shape their experiences and realities from childhood into adulthood.

#### Attitudes and Social Expectations about Schooling and Work

**Men in our sample shared a strong appreciation of the importance of education for future career and personal success.** In Table 5 the data show that respondents hold both personal attitudes and perceived social expectations that education is a positive life investment. For example, an overwhelming majority of respondents agree that doing well in school helps them get a good job (79 percent), and that their parents expected them to do well in school (92 percent) and supported their academic goals (81 percent). It is important to note that our Facebook-based sample has higher educational attainment than the general population, and thus is more likely to

endorse positive statements about education. Nevertheless, the findings provide insight into the complex dynamics behind school and work decisions.

Table 5 : Attitudes and Social Norms about Education and Work (n=1,001)

Respondents who Agree or Strongly Agree with Attitudinal and Social Norms Statements about Education and Work	Percent
<b>Attitudes related to education, work, and earnings</b>	
Doing well in school helps you get a good job	79
A man does not need to get a CSEC certificate to be successful	61
University education only leads to high paying jobs if you already have money or connections	42
Men need money to get girls	24
University graduates can't find jobs, so why bother?	15
University education has no value for my future	8
<b>Social norms related to education, work, and earnings</b>	
My parents expected me to do well in school	92
My parents supported my educational efforts and achievements	81
My parents expected me to get a university degree	69
My girlfriend expects me to earn money to buy her things or take her out	44
My parents encouraged me to get a job instead of staying in school or going to university	18
My family felt that that it was more important that I find a job than finish secondary school	15
My peers would have teased me if I were good in school	8
My friends think that a man who does well in school is a loser	4

A smaller percentage of men reported unsupportive attitudes and social expectations about continuing their education. Nearly one in five said their parents encouraged them to get a job instead of staying in school or going to university. While a majority of men believed that doing well in school helps you get a good job, two in five agreed that “university education only leads to high-paying jobs if you already have money or connections.” Lastly, nearly 6 out of 10 respondents did

not think a CSEC is necessary to be successful.<sup>13</sup> The reported skepticism about the CSEC exam may be linked to perceived difficulties about getting ahead based on merit, or a lack of faith in the certificate credentialing and its potential opportunities.

### **Confidence and Aspirations about Schooling and Work**

As shown in Figure 2, most respondents (91 percent) feel confident in themselves and their abilities to excel academically and reach their professional goals. Meanwhile, a lower percentage of men—7 out of 10—felt confident about their financial future. About 31 percent of men shared that others in their life kept telling them that they will not be able to be successful in their life (data not shown).

*Figure 2 : Respondents who Agree or Strongly Agree with Confidence and Aspirational Statements about Education and Work (n=1,001)*

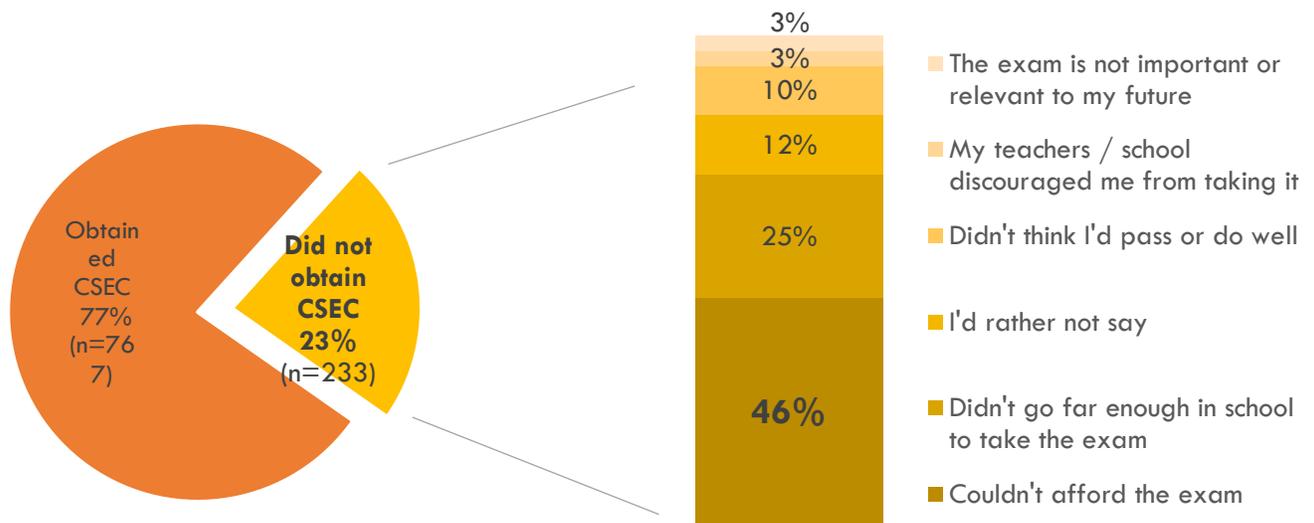


### **Reasons for Leaving School**

Among the respondents who left school at the lower secondary level, the primary reasons for doing so were economic: 23 percent could not afford school or costs associated with school, and 21 percent had to work. Additional structural barriers may also be responsible, as suggested by the 11 percent who reported that no upper grades existed at their secondary school. Economic reasons similarly were the main reason for respondents not taking the CSEC.

<sup>13</sup> A CSEC is obtained after a student passes a transition exam at the end of the secondary lower level (grade 11).

Figure 3: Respondents' Reasons for not Obtaining a CSEC Certificate (n=1,000)



Among the respondents who did not obtain a CSEC certification, close to half reported not taking the test because they could not afford the exam fee. Another 25 percent did not progress far enough in school to take the exam, perhaps also for economic reasons, as described in the reasons for leaving school. Only three percent felt the exam was not important or relevant for them. About 12 percent of men did not want to share the reason why they did not take the exam (Figure 3).

### Transitioning out of School

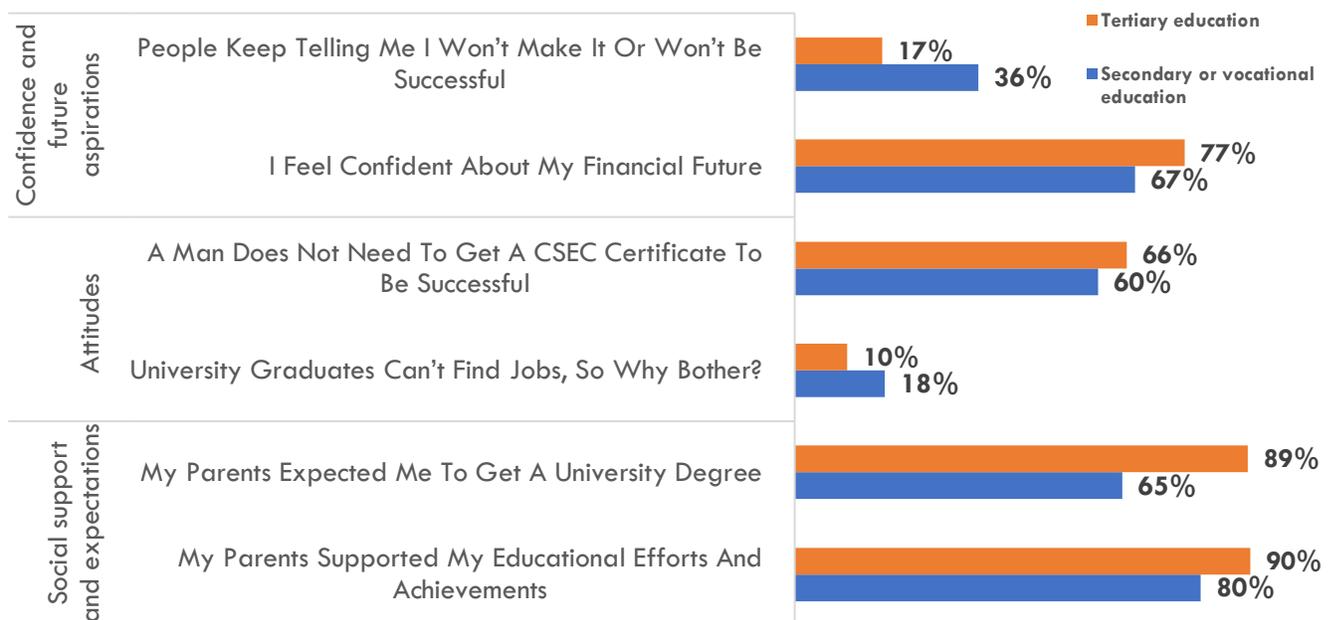
To better understand transitions from school to the workforce, we asked respondents how they spent the year following their leaving school. About 17 percent of men reported being in an educational program at the time of the survey. Of the remaining men who were out of school, 61 percent reported working for pay the year after they completed their schooling, followed by being unemployed but looking for work (22 percent), being in an apprenticeship program (seven percent), and caring for a family member (three percent), among others. These data suggest that a large percentage of men do become employed during their transition from education to the labor market, but that close to one in four men spent the year being unemployed.

### Men’s Academic Achievement Gap: When Finances and Social Expectations Collide

Given the relatively high educational attainment among surveyed men, the high levels of confidence and social support reported by respondents about their educational goals is not all that unexpected. As such, we sought to further understand any differences in confidence, attitudes, and social expectations across men with tertiary education, compared to those with secondary or vocational training level education.

As shown in Figure 4, a larger percentage of respondents who did not get beyond secondary and/or vocational training reported that others in their life told them they would not be successful, compared to those with tertiary education. Also, those without tertiary education reported lower confidence about their financial future. Attitudinal differences about the CSEC certificate and the value of a university degree were smaller between the two groups, but a large percentage of respondents believes that a CSEC certificate is not needed to be successful (66 percent of those with tertiary education and 60 percent of those with secondary/vocational education).

Figure 4 : Respondents Who Agree or Strongly Agree with Statements about Education and Work, by secondary and tertiary education levels (n=976)



There were significant differences in reported levels of parental support and expectations about education between those with higher and lower educational attainment. While almost all men with

tertiary education reported that their parents expected them to get a university degree, just over 6 in 10 men with lower educational attainment agreed with the same statement. Further, about 22 percent of men without tertiary education reported that their family felt that it was more important for them to find a job than go to university, compared to 11 percent of men without tertiary education (data not shown in figure).

**Our earlier findings suggest economic and social support barriers to completing the CSEC needed to pursue higher education.** Given this, we also compared attitudinal and social normative items across those who completed a CSEC certificate and those who did not. Consistent with the data in Figure 4, these results suggest that while men who did and did not complete a CSEC certificate do not differ greatly in terms of their attitudes and outlook about education, they experience differing levels of support and expectations of education from others in their life, particularly family members.

**Overall, these data suggest that financial reasons, combined with norms that put pressure on men to provide financially, seem to play an important role in deciding whether a man would pursue further education.** While respondents might personally value the importance of education and are confident in their ability to excel academically, respondents' answers suggest that economic realities and expectations related to men's financial contributions may get in the way of their continuing education.

#### **ADHERENCE TO GENDER RULES AND INFLUENCES ON MASCULINITIES:**

**This section focuses on the ways in which young men's adherence to the Man Box rules influences their lives.** Men inside the Man Box are defined as those who are more likely to agree with statements about the self-sufficiency; acting tough; rigid masculine gender roles; heterosexuality and homophobia; hypersexuality; and education and work (see table 3). Those outside of the Man Box are more likely to disagree with these statements. We analyze the associations between Man Box adherence and various experiences, attitudes, and behaviors, although given the nature of the study, it is not possible to identify causation.

**Table 6 compares the characteristics of men who are inside the Man Box and those who are outside it.** A larger percentage of Men inside the Man Box were younger, had lower educational attainment, and were not employed full time.

*Table 6: Characteristics of Men Inside and Outside of the Man Box (n=1,001)*

	<b>In the Box (n=479)</b>	<b>Out of the Box (n=522)</b>
<b>Personal Characteristics</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Age		
18–24 years	<b>56</b>	<b>48 *</b>
25–30 years	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>
Has a CSEC Certificate	75	80
Has some tertiary education	<b>20</b>	<b>34 ***</b>
Employed full time	<b>49</b>	<b>56 *</b>
Has monthly income of over JA\$ 90,000	38	41
In a relationship	39	43
Has children	24	24

Note: Asterisks denote significant differences between groups as per p-values: \*<.05; \*\* <0.01; \*\*\* <0.001)

**Multiple regression analysis was also conducted to better understand the association between different socio-demographic characteristics and whether a participant was inside or outside of the Man Box** while holding constant the other characteristics. When including age, education, employment, and relationship status in the model, men with tertiary schooling had 116 percent greater odds of being outside of the Man Box, compared to those with secondary schooling (adjusted odds ratio [aOR]=2.16, analysis table not shown). Also, men who reported being employed full time had 31 percent greater odds of being outside of the Man Box relative to those without full-time employment (aOR=1.31).

### **What is it like living inside the Man Box?**

The remainder of this section focuses on the overall effect of young men’s adherence or non-adherence to rigid ideas about masculinities, across men inside and outside of the Man Box, and across varying degrees of gender-equitable views, through the following themes: 1. Life

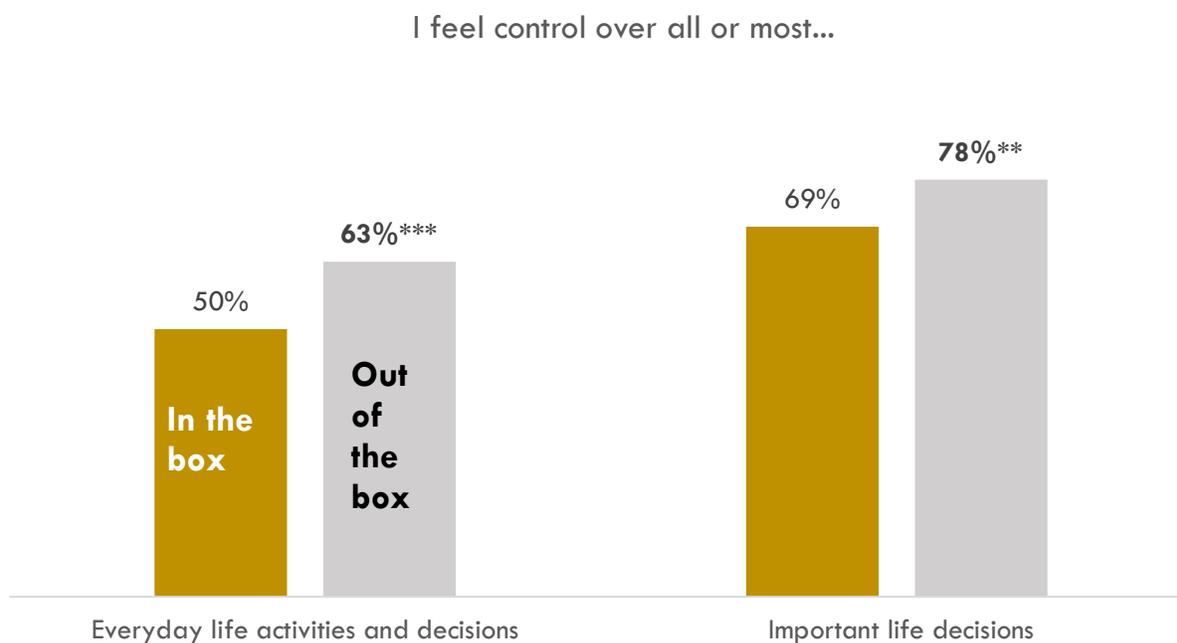
satisfaction, 2. Risky behaviors, 3. Bullying and violence, 4. Mental health, and 5. Social support and connection.

### **Life Satisfaction and Control**

In the original Man Box study, the authors (Heilman, Barker, & Harrison, 2017) found that ideas about masculinity were strongly connected to overall life satisfaction in the United States, United Kingdom, and Mexico. We sought to understand if this relationship applied to the experiences of young men in Jamaica. Young men were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, their overall satisfaction with their life at present, as well as their perceived feelings of control over everyday life decisions and larger important life decisions. Young men who are inside the Man Box rated their satisfaction as slightly lower than did their peers outside of the Man Box (5.2 and 5.5, respectively).

Noteworthy differences were found when comparing feeling of control over life decisions between those inside and outside of the Man Box. As shown in Figure 5, men generally felt they had less control over day-to-day life decisions compared to bigger life decisions. And over both daily and bigger life decisions, young men who abide by the Man Box rules are significantly less likely to feel they have control compared to men who live outside of the Man Box.

Figure 5 : Men who Report Having Control over All or Most Daily and Life Decisions, by Men who are in and out of the Man Box (n=1,001)



Note: Asterisks denote significant differences between groups as per p-values: \*<.05; \*\* <0.01; \*\*\* <0.001

**When reviewing answers across quintiles of Man Box scores—that is, across the range of levels of agreement—the same pattern holds of increasing feelings of control with more equitable views.** While over half of the men in the most inequitable quintile reported feeling they did not have control over everyday life decisions, only about a third of men in the most equitable quintile answered the same. For bigger life decisions, about two in five men in the most inequitable group said they did not feel they had control, compared to one in five men in the most equitable group.

**These findings suggest that in Jamaica, less adherence to rigid masculine norms is associated with a greater sense of control over life decisions.** This association was consistent when controlling for other demographic factors such as age, education, and employment in multiple regression models. For example, men outside of the Man Box had between 47 and 54 percent greater odds of feeling control over large important life decisions and smaller everyday life decisions relative to those inside the Man Box (aOR=1.47 and aOR=1.54, respectively). In fact, it may be that individuals who embrace a broader set of acceptable

behaviors for men feel the benefits of this freedom and flexibility. Alternatively, other personal characteristics were also associated with more equitable attitudes—for example, exposure to higher education—which may be driving the stronger sense of satisfaction and control. Indeed, men who had lower educational attainment reported significantly lower life satisfaction than those with higher educational attainment. Specifically, men with a CSEC certificate scored their life satisfaction as 5.6 compared to 4.7 among those who did not have a CSEC.

**In addition to perceived control over their life decisions, men were asked whose opinion they consider the most when making important decisions about something in their life.** Overall, men most cited their mother, followed by friends, a romantic partner, one or more siblings, and lastly, their father. This suggests that mothers may be an important reference group influencing larger life decisions and behaviors among young men in Jamaica.

### **Well-being and Social Connectedness**

In this study, we used the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2), an internationally validated initial screening tool for depressive disorder. The tool includes two questions related to experiences of depression over the two weeks preceding the survey: “I had little interest or pleasure in doing things” and “feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.” In a clinical setting, any respondent who meets the depression score threshold—a score of three or higher out of six points—would be referred for additional screening for potential depressive disorder diagnosis.<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that scores on the PHQ-2 should not be interpreted as a diagnosis.

**Prevalence of depression-related symptoms among young Jamaican men are troubling.** Approximately 41 percent of men surveyed met the threshold score for depression (score of 3 or higher), with close to one-third of all men reporting feeling down, depressed, or hopeless at least every day or more than half the days in the past two weeks. A small but striking percentage of young men—four percent—report having thoughts of suicide on “more than half the days” in the last two weeks; this percentage rises to 11 percent when including men who reported having thoughts of suicide on some of the days or more often in the past two weeks.

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<sup>14</sup> These two survey items have four possible answers, which receive points as follows: Not at all (0 points), Some days (1 point), More than half the days (2 points), and Nearly every day (3 points). Taken together, the possible score ranges from 0 to 6. A respondent scoring 3 points or higher is recommended for further screening.

Table 7: Respondents Who Report Depression Symptoms, by Men Inside and Outside of the Box (n=993)

	In the box (n=478)	Out of the box (n=515)
<b>Experienced nearly every day or more than half the days in past 2 weeks):</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Little interest or pleasure in doing things <sup>^</sup>	30	29
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless <sup>^</sup>	<b>33</b>	<b>27 *</b>
Having thoughts of suicide	<b>3</b>	<b>6 *</b>

Note: <sup>^</sup>Item included in PHQ-2 depression composite score; Asterisks denote significant differences between groups as per p-values: \*<.05; \*\* <0.01; \*\*\* <0.001.

**Men inside the Man Box are more likely to experience symptoms of depression.** The percentage of men who met the PHQ-2 threshold score did not differ significantly between those inside and outside of the Man Box. However, men inside the Man Box had slightly higher depression scores (2.6) compared to men outside of the box (2.4). Interestingly, while men inside the box were significantly more likely to report feeling down or depressed, more men outside of the box reported having thoughts of suicide in the last two weeks, as shown in Table 7.

In terms of quintiles of Man Box scores, the likelihood of meeting the threshold score for depression decreased with more equitable views: while about 5 in 10 men in the most inequitable quintile met the PHQ-2 threshold score, 4 in 10 in the most equitable quintile did the same.

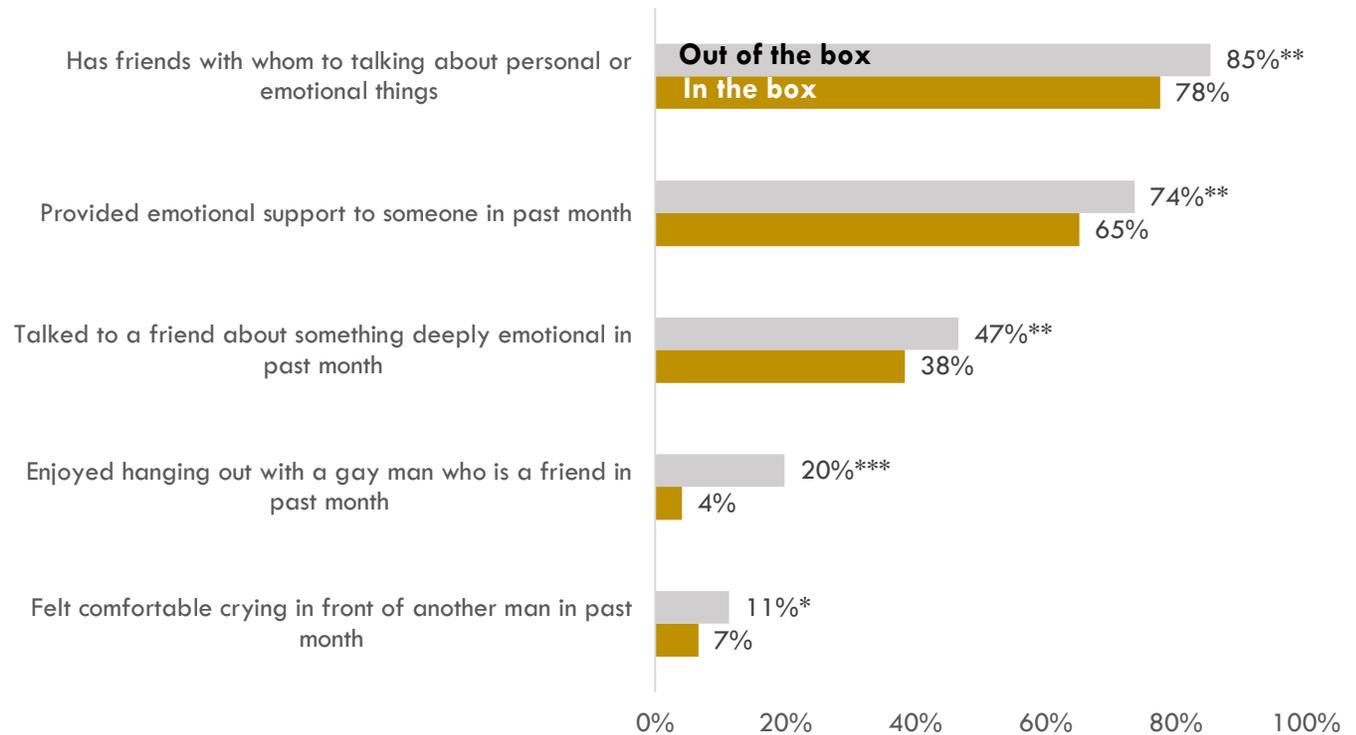
**Both educational attainment and employment status were significantly correlated with depression symptoms.** Thirty-three percent of men with tertiary-level university education met the depression symptoms threshold, compared to 44 percent of men with lower educational attainment. Also, a lower percentage of men in full-time employment met the depression symptom screening threshold (37 percent), compared to those without full-time employment (45 percent). We did not find a significant association between depression symptoms and men’s monthly income. However, a smaller portion of men displayed symptoms of depression with increasing monthly income, ranging from 46 percent of men making less than JA\$30,000 to 39 percent of men making more than JA\$90,000 per month.

**Not expressing emotions and being self-reliant are core elements of the Man Box’s pillars of perceived self-sufficiency and toughness.** It is therefore not surprising that men outside of

the Man Box reported greater emotional and social connectedness. As shown in Figure 6, men outside the box were significantly more likely to have friends with whom to talk about personal feelings and provide emotional support to others relative to men inside the box. While men rarely reported feeling comfortable crying in front of other men, a larger percentage of men outside the Man Box reported doing so in the last month, compared to men inside the Man Box. Lastly, one in five men out of the box reported hanging out with a gay male friend in the last month, compared to less than 1 in 10 men inside the box.

**In comparisons across quintiles of Man Box scores, generally increasingly equitable views were associated with stronger social support and emotional connectedness**, and these relationships were all statistically significant. The difference was most stark on the question related to spending time with a gay male friend: a person in the least inequitable quintile was **more than eight times** as likely to have positive views and experiences of homosexuality as someone in the most inequitable group. Patterns noted in the preceding paragraph between men inside and outside of the Man Box also generally hold across quintiles of Man Box scores.

Figure 6: Social Support and Emotional Connection Reported by Men in and out of the Man Box (n=986)



Note: Asterisks denote significant differences between groups as per following p-values: \*<.05; \*\* <0.01; \*\*\* <0.001.

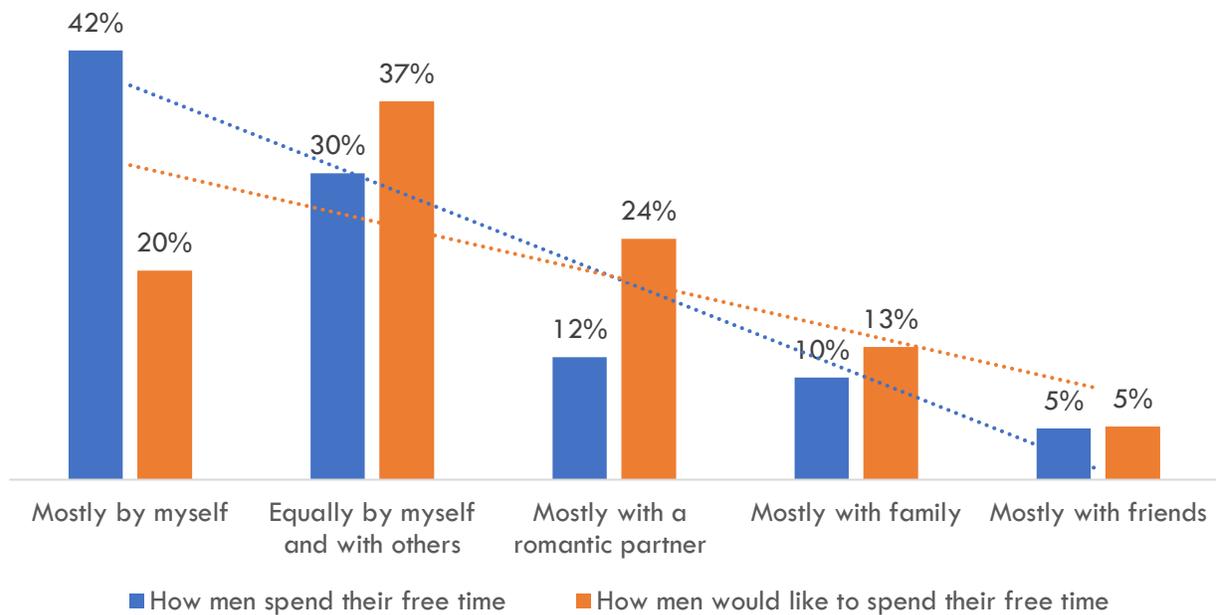
**Experiences of social connection and emotional support were compared across different respondents' sociodemographic characteristics.** Consistent with other results in this report, we found significant differences in social support among those with different levels of education. While levels of support were generally quite high, men who had more than secondary schooling were more likely to say they had friends they could talk to (87 percent) and provided emotional support to someone else (77 percent), compared to those with lower levels of education (80 percent and 67 percent, respectively). Lastly, being in a romantic relationship was significantly associated with both providing emotional support to someone and talking with someone about something deeply emotional.

**When asked about whom they sought out for help when feeling sad or depressed, men typically cited a romantic partner (29 percent), followed by their mother (28 percent), a female or male friend (25 percent and 24 percent), or a sibling (seven percent).** Men also

cited not seeking help from anyone (17 percent), consistent with expected and reinforcing masculine norms of self-sufficiency. Finally, fewer than five percent of men reported seeing a therapist or psychiatrist to seek help when feeling sad or depressed.

**Men’s desire for social connectedness was reflected in discrepancies between the ways that they reported spending their free time and the idealized ways in which they would like to spend their free time.** As seen in Figure 7, while nearly two in five men reported spending time by themselves in their actual life, only one in five men reported that they ideally desired to spend their time on their own. While 1 in 10 men reported spending time with a romantic partner in real time, a much larger percentage of men wished to spend more time with a romantic partner.

Figure 7 : Ways that Men Report Spending their Free Time versus How they would Ideally Prefer to Spend their Free Time (n=993)



Lastly, men were asked about their involvement in social activities in their communities over the last 12 months. Three in four men reported spending their time on music (singing, dancing, DJ-ing), followed by volunteer work (61 percent), engaging in other community groups or organizations (48 percent), playing on a sports team (39 percent), and participating in a church youth group (29 percent). Men outside of the Man Box were more likely to report doing volunteer

work and collaborating with other community organizations, while men inside the Man Box were more likely to report that they participated in sports teams and leagues over the last 12 months.

## **Risk-Taking Behaviors**

**Globally, men have been shown to be at higher risk of morbidity and mortality as a result of risk-taking behaviors that include alcohol and other substance use** (Baker, et al., 2014); (Ragonese, Shand, & Baker, 2019). Risky behaviors are often linked to dominant and rigid masculinities, where a man is expected to act tough and undertake risky behaviors. Overall, we found low reported levels of substance use among surveyed men. Specifically, 55 percent of men reported never drank enough to get drunk in the last 12 months, and 22 percent of men reported not drinking alcohol at all.

**In Jamaica, we found no significant differences between men inside and outside of the Man Box in terms of alcohol use** (see Table 8). Somewhat surprisingly, a slightly larger percentage of younger men aged 18 to 24 reported not drinking at all (27 percent), compared to older men aged 25 to 30 (17 percent). Men in relationships, with at least one child, and with higher monthly income also reported higher frequency of drinking over the last year.

**About 1 in 10 men reported smoking ganja (marijuana) once a month or more often in the past year.** As shown in Table 8, men inside the Man Box were likely to report smoking ganja once a month or more often compared to those outside of the Man Box, although the percentages were still relatively low for both groups. When comparing across quintiles, men who were in the most inequitable group were three times more likely to have smoked ganja in the past year, relative to those in the most equitable group.

Table 8: Men who Report Drinking, Smoking Ganja and Traffic Accidents, By Men who are in and out of the Man Box (n=993)

	In the Box	Out of the Box
In the past 12 months...	%	%
Got drunk once a month or more often	6.3	5.8
Smoked ganja once a month or more often	<b>17.6</b>	<b>11.7 **</b>
Was involved in a traffic accident	14.1	11.7

Note: Asterisks denote significant differences between groups as per p-values: \*<.05; \*\* <0.01; \*\*\* <0.001.

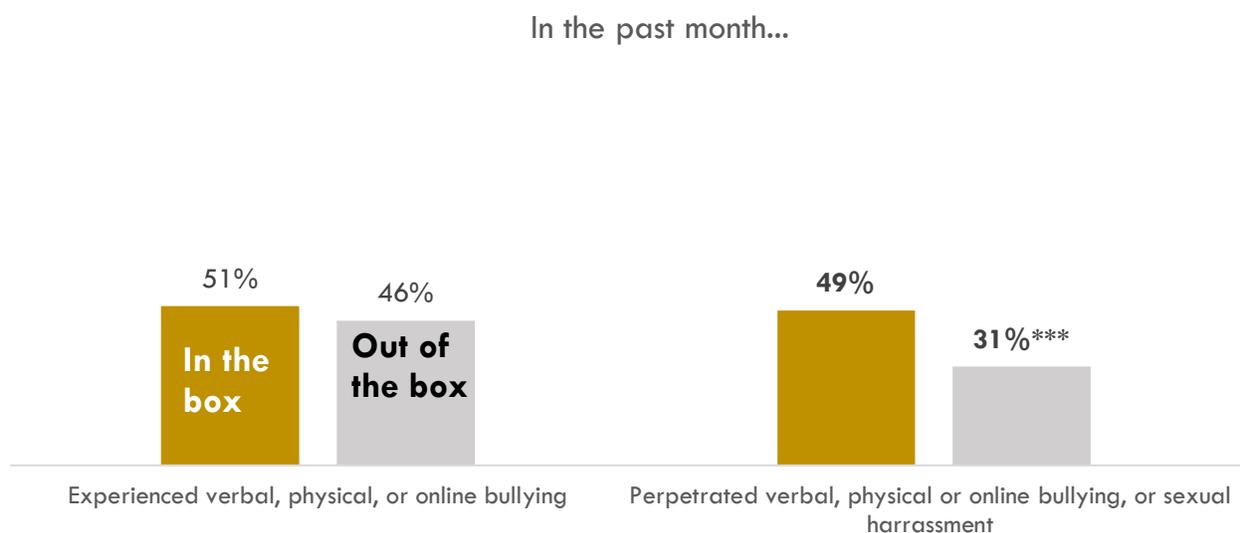
**Lastly, about 13 percent of men reported getting in a traffic accident in the last year. There were no differences across men inside and outside of the Man Box.** However, a slightly larger portion of men employed full time reported getting in a traffic accident in the last year (15 percent), compared to men not employed full time (ten percent). Other factors, such as age, education, or relationship status, were not found to be significantly associated with being involved in a traffic accident in the past year.

## Bullying and Violence

**Young men were asked about both experiencing and perpetrating three forms of bullying—verbal, online, and physical—and were also asked about perpetrating sexual harassment against women.** As shown in Figure 8, the experience and use of violence among young men in Jamaica is quite pervasive. Importantly, young men inside the Man Box are more likely to perpetuate bullying or violence, as well as experience violence, than men outside of the Man Box. This holds true across quintiles of Man Box scores as well, with men in the most inequitable quintile more than twice as likely to have perpetrated some form of violence in the past year relative to men in the most equitable quintile (60 percent versus 28 percent).

**Differences between men inside and outside of the box were particularly striking for perpetration of bullying and sexual harassment.** For example, men inside the box (26 percent) were more than twice as likely to make sexual comments to a woman in a public or online space than men outside of the box (13 percent), and about 1.5 times more likely to make jokes or tease someone (37 percent versus 24 percent).

Figure 8: Experience and Perpetration of Bullying Reported by Men In and Out of the Man Box (n=998)



Note: Asterisks denote significant differences between groups as per following p-values: \*<.05; \*\* <0.01; \*\*\* <0.001.

**Interestingly, unlike the Man Box scale, no socio-demographic characteristics such as age, education, income, or employment were associated with perpetration and experience of violence among men, with one exception: 45 percent of men with a monthly income of \$JA 90,000 or higher reported perpetuating some form of violence in the last month, compared to 37 percent of men below the \$JA 90,000 income threshold.**

**Among men who reported experiencing some form of verbal, physical, or online harassment, their perceived reasons for experiencing this violence included being generally different than others (32 percent), followed by their personality (30 percent), looks (27 percent), intelligence (25 percent), their body (18 percent), the group of friends they hang out with (17 percent), clothing (14 percent), and income (14 percent).** Other lower reported reasons also included sexuality (nine percent), race or ethnicity (five percent), and political affiliation (two percent).

**Attitudes and social expectations about family violence.** Lastly, men were asked about attitudinal and social normative expectations of intimate partner violence and violence against children in their communities. In general, men almost unanimously disagreed with the statement,

“If a woman cheats on a man, it is okay for him to hit her,” with only one percent in agreement with this statement. However, one in four men agreed that it is expected that men should hit their children in order to discipline them. Perceived social expectations about harsh physical punishment of children differed significantly between those inside and outside of the Man Box: 31 percent of men inside the box agreed that it is expected in their communities to hit their children to discipline them, compared to only 20 percent of men outside of the box.

**Overall, these results highlight that young men inside the Man Box are more likely to have used violence against other young men—verbal, physical, and online—and to have sexually harassed women.** They are also slightly more likely to have experienced violence themselves. Yet, while men inside the Man Box are more likely to perpetuate violence, they are also more likely to intervene in a fight or quarrel among their friends. Taken together, these findings suggest that ideas and messaging about rigid masculinities are strongly related to the use of violence both within the private sphere and relationships, and at large within the larger public community.

## CONCLUSION

**The Man Box report reaffirms gender research that has demonstrated the crux of gender inequality in Jamaica lies not only in the traditional areas of disadvantage for women<sup>15</sup> but also in education and social violence, where men suffer the greatest impacts.<sup>16</sup>** Overall, the findings of the Man Box Jamaica study highlight that the Man Box—a set of socially reinforced rules about what “real men” should do—is alive and well in Jamaica. While there are many diverse manifestations and permutations of masculinity in Jamaica, the pillars that form the Man Box scale have wide applicability and highlight impact between men “inside” and “outside” of the box across outcomes. Being inside the Man Box causes young men—and others around them—real harm, specifically in terms of violence and mental health. Young men’s own ideas about manhood intersect with expectations from others as well as material realities to shape their lives.

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<sup>15</sup> Poverty and unemployment; violence against women and girls; sexual and reproductive health outcomes; barriers to entrepreneurship and public- and private-sector leadership.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, women and children in Jamaica are overrepresented among the poor and very poor. In addition, even though women outperform men in education, the employment rate for men is higher than that of women.

**Young men in Jamaica face both social normative and structural barriers to continuing education and finding stable work.** We found that young men, as well as their peers and family members, highly valued the role of education in ensuring financial and life stability. Key barriers to continuing education included lack of economic resources and social support to take the CSEC certificate and proceed beyond secondary level. Young men with lower educational attainment were less likely to be satisfied with their lives, exhibit more symptoms of depression, and be less socially supported and emotionally connected to others.

**The harmful effects of the Man Box in Jamaica are real, severe, and diverse.** The majority of men who adhere to the rules of the Man Box are more likely to put their health and well-being at risk, to cut themselves off from intimate friendships, to resist seeking help when they need it, and to experience depression. Young men inside the Man Box are more likely to have used violence against other young men—verbal, physical, and online—and to have sexually harassed women. Men inside the Man Box appear to have lower emotional and social connectedness and are less likely to have close relationships and friendships. This is consistent with other research in Jamaica that confirms that boys are less likely than girls to seek health services when they need them and less likely to be attuned to their health needs. A national survey of young people aged 15–24 found that young women were more than twice as likely (29.8 percent versus 13 percent) to talk to health personnel about family life education topics than were young men (Serbanescu, Ruiz, Alicia, & Suchdev, 2010). Adolescent boys say they largely rely on the media and on their self-taught peers for information about sexuality and reproductive health.

**Young men’s relationships with the ideals of manhood are complex, and at times contradictory.** Young men in the Man Box appear to be satisfied with their lives, although slightly less so than those outside of the Man Box, and yet at the same time display more symptoms of depression. Men in the Man Box are more likely to perpetrate violence and are also more likely to intervene in a fight or quarrel among their friends. These are real contradictions. We believe, however, that they are accurate and logical representations of the dilemmas young men face in navigating society’s contradictory ideals of manhood. Young men reap certain benefits from staying inside the Man Box in Jamaica: it provides them with a sense of belonging and of living up to what is expected of them. However, when those same norms tell men to be aggressive all the time, to repress emotions, the Man Box demands that they pretend to be someone they are not, and the resulting life can be violent and isolating.

**Breaking out of the box is not something that young men can do on their own.** Indeed, if conforming to the rigid norms of the Man Box were obviously disadvantageous to men, few men would do so. Navigating the rewards and punishments of manhood is a real dilemma in many settings. We recognize that this picture is more complicated, with men often having to navigate not just one Man Box, but in reality, multiple Man Boxes imposed on them by society at large. In this reality, all of us—young men and young women, parents, educators, the media, teachers, romantic partners, and all members of society—have a role to play in reinforcing positive, equitable, unrestrictive, and diverse ideas of manhood for the young men in Jamaica, and in millions of other communities across the world.

These findings inform interventions and policies that can improve the lives of young Jamaican men and women.

**First, young men in the study expressed external and structural barriers to continuing their education and passing their CSEC examinations.** Education policies should focus on socially and financially supporting young men (and women) to continue their schooling beyond their CSEC examinations. Supporting the development of foundational, socioemotional and cognitive skills, addressing areas of education inequality, and parenting programs are important areas for policy attention.

**Second, young men inside the box were more likely to use intimate partner violence, and yet also intervene in others' violent altercations in their community.** At the same time, men inside the box were also more likely to perceive a social expectation that physical punishment should be used to discipline children. Future research should be conducted with young Jamaican men to explore violence perpetration, experiences, and interventions more deeply.

**Lastly, the findings highlight notable adverse mental health experiences of young men and particularly for those who adhere to rigid ideas about masculinity.** Intervention efforts should increase resources toward addressing the mental health experiences of young men, with a targeted effort toward identifying and working with young men on transforming rigid norms.

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