

# Regional Comparative Report

## Survey of Individuals Deprived of Liberty: Caribbean 2016–2019

The Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica,  
Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago

Prepared for the Inter-American Development Bank by:  
CELIV and National University of Tres de Febrero,  
Argentina)

Researchers: Marcelo Bergman, Randy Seepersad,  
Ana Safranoff, and Fernando Cafferata

Editors: Dana Michael King, Viviana Vélez-Grajales,  
and Lina Marmolejo

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# Survey of Individuals Deprived of Liberty Caribbean (2016–2019)

## Regional Comparative Report

September 2020

**CELIV and National University of Tres de Febrero, Argentina**

Researchers: Marcelo Bergman, Randy Seepersad, Ana Safranoff, and Fernando Cafferata

Editors: Dana Michael King, Viviana Vélez-Grajales, and Lina Marmolejo

### Abstract

This report presents new systematic data on the characteristics of inmates in prisons in six Caribbean countries, the factors which may have led to their incarceration, the conditions within the prisons' facilities, the judicial processes that led to their convictions, and their perspectives of re-entry. The data were collected through the Survey of Individuals Deprived of Liberty in The Bahamas (2016), Barbados (2018), Guyana (2017), Jamaica (2018), Suriname (2018), and Trinidad and Tobago (2018). Special emphasis is placed on gender, age, and legal status as well as on the problem of recidivism by seeking to identify the conditions that led prisoners to become repeat offenders. There were several important findings that highlight strengths and weaknesses within the correctional systems of the Caribbean. This study provides relevant insights to improving the general situation of prisons in the Caribbean region. Overall, the results suggest that more effort needs to be placed on programs and policies that improve inmates' conditions within the prisons (more educational programs and paid employment opportunities; adequate legal defense and streamlined court processes; reduced overcrowding and victimization, among other things). Finally, the report highlights that comprehensive re-entry strategies should be developed for all Caribbean countries.

**JEL codes:** H59, H76, K14, K42, N46

**Keywords:** criminal career, Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, The Bahamas, Barbados, incarcerated women, incarcerated men, crime prevention, prisoners, prisons, intrafamily violence, prison system

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## Preface and Acknowledgments

This comparative study of prisons in the Caribbean is one of the largest efforts to understand one of the most challenging social processes in the region: the increase in incarceration in the past decade and how it has affected social, political, and judicial life within the Caribbean region. This study replicated similar methods and approaches to understand the impact of incarceration in six countries. It involved mobilizing national and international experts, developing data collection instruments, training dozens of participants, and required the anonymous support of more than 3,000 inmates who responded to surveys and shared their experiences.

A long list of individuals, organizations, and public officers helped bring this project to a successful completion. First, we recognize the leadership and initiatives of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which embraced and funded this project. We want to thank Dana King, the project leader, who read many drafts of the materials developed for this study and tirelessly recruited and supervised the people necessary to complete it. We also thank Arnaldo Posadas, Viviana Vélez-Grajales, Lina Marmolejo, and Mariko Russell from the IDB; they each helped advance this project at different stages.

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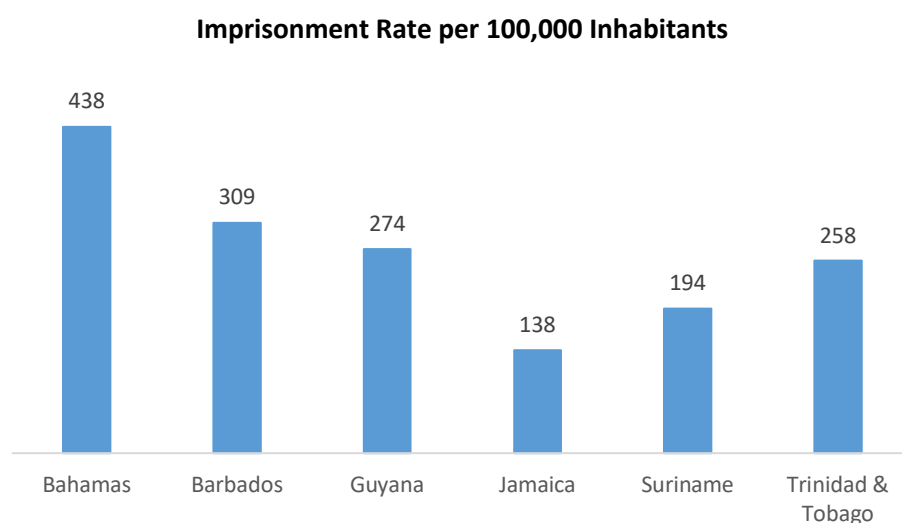
## Executive Summary

This comparative study examines survey data collected from 3,528 inmates in six Caribbean countries: The Bahamas (2016), Barbados (2018), Guyana (2017), Jamaica (2018), Suriname (2018), and Trinidad and Tobago (2018). This report is an original contribution to policymaking that amplifies the voices of incarcerated individuals, who are often neglected in policy decisions, and offers a robust diagnosis of the realities and challenges faced by incarcerated individuals and prison managers.

Among other things, the findings and recommendations presented in this study point to the urgent need for prison reform across the Caribbean and offer directions to Caribbean governments as they consider the role of prisons in creating safer and more just societies. Broadly, the recommendations are grouped into four broad policy recommendations.

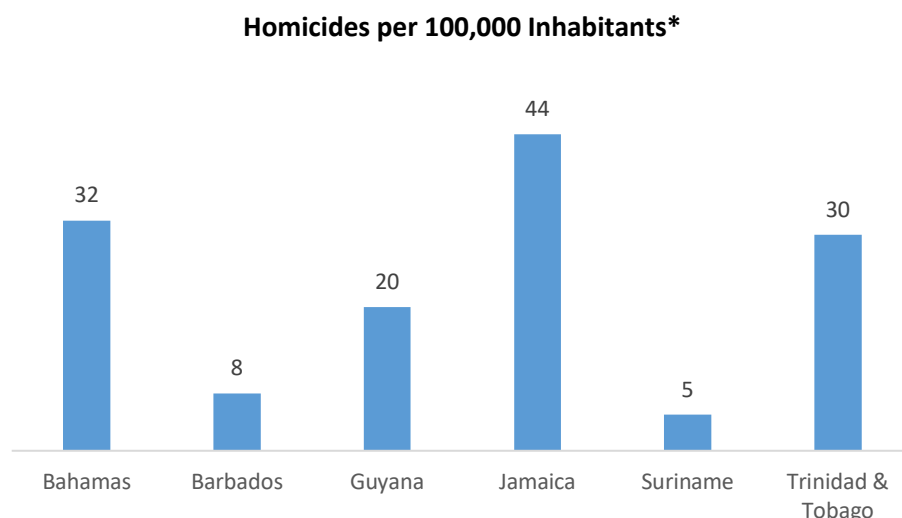
### 1. Caribbean governments should prioritize reducing the prison population.

Caribbean countries tend to use incarceration to a greater degree than countries in other regions. Six of the fifteen countries with the highest incarceration rates worldwide are Caribbean islands. With one exception, the countries studied in this report had incarceration rates well above the international average of 145 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants.



*Source: World Prison Brief (2018)*

Yet, incarceration has not made Caribbean communities safe. The Caribbean region suffers from a higher than world average homicide rate—16 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants compared with 6 globally (UNODC, 2013)—indicating that imprisonment has a low deterrence effect on serious crime in the region. Indeed, four of the six countries studied in this report have homicide rates more than three times the global average.



Source: IDB (2017a)

\* All rates are for 2013 except for The Bahamas, which is for 2014.

Additionally, there is no evidence that the large incarceration of people who committed drug-related crime is reducing the availability of illegal drugs. Except for Jamaica, the other five countries have between 11% and 20% of their inmates locked up for drug related crime, some of them charged for felonies with no violence. Incarceration does not appear to significantly reduce criminality in these countries.

Very importantly, non-convicted persons account for a sizable portion of the prison population. Approximately 50 percent or more of the total prison population in three of the six countries surveyed, and between 23 and 42 percent of the population in the remaining countries, is comprised of persons who have not been convicted; many of whom are first-time offenders and/or committed non-violent offenses. Survey findings suggest that inmates on remand are housed in worse conditions, experience higher levels of violence, and participate less in social reintegration activities.

Incarceration is costly for Caribbean governments. The 2017 IDB book *The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean* analyzed incarceration-related public expenditure and income losses as a percentage of GDP in seventeen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Of the sample, the four Caribbean countries included in the study - The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago – spent the most on prison administration of the sample. In terms of the global cost of incarceration, as measured by both prison administration expenditure and income loss associated with incarceration as a percentage of GDP, The Bahamas and Barbados led the 17-country sample, while Trinidad and Jamaica came in sixth and seventh, respectively (Jaitman, 2017).

Taken together, these findings indicate that incarceration in the Caribbean is neither effective nor efficient in producing greater safety or just outcomes. Caribbean governments are encouraged to actively pursue strategies to reduce the prison population. These include:

- Establish programs to divert people who have committed non-serious offenses or who do not pose a threat to the public out of the prison system and into some form of alternative punishment

or treatment. Given that drug offenses account for a notable proportion of offenders, people convicted of crimes related to drug use should be diverted to treatment.

- Decrease the use of pretrial detention to ensure that prison is reserved for people who pose an imminent risk to public safety, who are persistent offenders, and who commit serious crimes.
- Make serious efforts to separate convicted inmates from prisoners in remand.
- Reform criminal procedures and pretrial and sentencing policies by implementing information and communication technologies to increase the efficiency of court cases in areas such as recording and scheduling processes; introducing complementary approaches to deal with crime, such as restorative justice practices; encouraging key judicial actors to use alternatives to detention at the pretrial stage; offering bail amounts according to defendants' ability to pay; ensuring access to legal representation; setting custody limits; and putting mechanisms in place to track detention to reduce the possibility that inmates on remand are held for excessive periods of time prior to trial.
- Explore community-based sanctions such as suspended sentences, probation, electronic monitoring, house arrest, community service, drug-treatment courts, and fines to lower imprisonment rates and reduce the costs of the prison systems.
- Develop strong parole-type systems whereby inmates can benefit from early release while they receive legal supervision by parole and judicial agencies. Strong consideration should also be given to releasing aged prisoners who no longer pose a threat to the public.

**2. Rehabilitation and reintegration programs need to be dramatically expanded and strengthened in Caribbean prisons as do post-release services for formerly incarcerated persons.**

In aggregate terms, 41 percent of inmates surveyed in the six Caribbean countries were recidivists compared to 33 percent in aggregate in the prison populations of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru. Roughly 40 percent of prisoners that recidivated were imprisoned within a year of their release. In Guyana, Barbados, Suriname, and The Bahamas, roughly a quarter lost their freedom again in less than 6 months. These stark findings are cause for concern, making clear that the prison system fails to rehabilitate many offenders or ensure their successful reentry into society.

In many ways, this is unsurprising given the state of rehabilitation programming in the surveyed prison systems. International research has found that employment programs, including work in prison, educational and vocational training programs that aim to equip inmates with useful credentials, and programs that prepare inmates for job searches outside of prison, are associated with lower recidivism rates. Survey results corroborate this among inmates working in Caribbean prisons. Yet, the survey responses indicate the unavailability and inadequacy of programming of this type in Caribbean prisons. Incarcerated individuals in the six survey countries had limited access to work-related programs in prison: between 33 percent in Barbados and 57 percent in The Bahamas. This is particularly concerning as inmates in the Caribbean usually had unemployment levels higher than the general population in their countries, indicating that limited access to the labor market may be a factor leading to their initial incarceration and underscoring the importance of using the time in prison to increase their labor credentials and thus their employability upon release. Participation rates in educational programming during incarceration were also



quite low, ranging from only 3 percent in Suriname to 49 percent in Jamaica. Importantly, this study also shows that low educational attainment is related to higher levels of criminal recidivism.

Similarly, supporting inmates to maintain strong bonds with family during and after incarceration is also an important factor in reducing recidivism. Visitation policies should encourage in-person visits and create a welcoming and comfortable environment for friends and relatives by providing spaces where friends and families can interact with inmates. Yet, survey findings indicate that between 23 and 50 percent of inmates in Caribbean prisons rarely or never see family members.

In the same vein, services to support successful reentry are lacking, contributing to high rates of recidivism. The surveys indicate that less than 1 in 5 prisoners have access to the pre-release services, such as counseling or orientations for job seeking: between 6 percent (in Suriname) and 14 percent (in Trinidad and Tobago). Post-release reentry support programs dedicated to issues like job search, housing, drug use treatment, mental health, and reintegration into the education system are almost entirely absent in Caribbean countries. With only 10 percent of the respondents receiving services, Jamaica had the highest proportion of inmates who accessed post-release services. While inmates may feel that they are ready for reintegration, the difficulties they face on release may be insurmountable, potentially leading to reoffending. These findings indicate that there are severe deficiencies in the quality and availability of reintegration and reentry programming in Caribbean prisons and that this may contribute to the high recidivism rate, as compared with Latin American countries.

Finally, as indicated in the section on risk factors associated with recidivism, in all of the countries studied, inmates who used drugs and/or alcohol before committing their crime showed higher levels of recidivism than those who did not consume such substances. According to international literature, individuals who have substance abuse issues when incarcerated and have access to treatment programs during custody show lower levels of drug use after leaving prison. Yet, none of the Caribbean prisons surveyed offer substance abuse treatment programs. Indeed, high levels of drug use were observed within the Caribbean prisons and, importantly, the results showed that most drugs are brought in by prison staff. Since drug use is a risk factor for criminal recidivism, the importance of extending participation in substance use treatment programs during incarceration is a key finding that emerges from this study. Within the confines of this study, the implications are clear—effective drug treatment within prisons is essential, as is the prevention of drug sales and use.

Caribbean governments are encouraged to actively expand availability and strengthen quality of rehabilitation and reentry programming. Recommended measures include:

- Make access to prison rehabilitation programs focusing on education, vocational training, employment preparation, cognitive behavioral therapy, and substance use disorder treatment available to all inmates.
- Develop collaborations with other government agencies (e.g., Ministry of Education and Health) and organizations (e.g., universities, NGOs, and private sector agencies) in providing such services as offenders move through the criminal justice system (i.e., pretrial, incarceration, and reentry).

- Ensure social and health services, including substance abuse treatment programs, are included as part of prison rehabilitation programming to support individual change and transformation.
- Develop pre- and post-release services that include incentives for employers to hire formerly incarcerated individuals. Explore strategies to provide paid employment to incarcerated persons while in prison and upon release, such as joint ventures with companies and “ban the box” policies, which require employers to eliminate the question on job applications about an applicant's criminal history and attempts to reduce employers' accessibility to criminal records.
- Implement public education and outreach programs to change public attitudes and assumptions about prisoners and reduce prejudices and stigma.

**3. Caribbean governments should implement more comprehensive public safety strategies that balance prevention and control and incorporate the wealth of empirical evidence that is available.**

A key finding of the study focused on the environment in which inmates are socialized and its implications for their criminal paths. Inmates who grew up in deprived settings—characterized by family violence, drug and alcohol abuse by parents or caregivers, incarceration of family members, early separation from their household, and criminal gangs in the neighborhood—were more likely to commit a crime and showed higher levels of recidivism. These risk factors were found consistently among the six countries studied, suggesting that they should be a focus of social prevention policies within Caribbean countries. It is essential that interventions strengthen family bonds; target parenting skills and childrearing practices; create family-centered programs for incarcerated parents, their children, and families; and develop childhood policies designed to intervene at early stages. The importance of preventative interventions—as opposed to crime suppression—cannot be emphasized enough, especially in the Caribbean. Some Caribbean governments have a long history of favoring punitive strategies based on crime suppression, and in so doing, preventative approaches are usually neglected. Yet, the populations of the Caribbean have expressed strong willingness to support preventative interventions in the fight against crime (UNDP, 2012).

The results also show that the factors that led to initial incarceration are also factors related to recidivism, including low educational attainment, drug use (personal use and growing up in a household where other family members used drugs), family violence (experiencing physical punishment and witnessing violence against their mother as a child), leaving home at an early age, and residing in neighborhoods with criminal gangs. These variables should be considered in designing interventions to reduce recidivism and as part of the comprehensive safety strategy implemented by governments.

Further, as a large part of the prison population—between 46 percent and 71 percent depending on the country—plan to return to their neighborhood after they leave prison, it is essential that the authorities identify the neighborhoods to which large contingents of people released from correctional centers return and strengthen key reintegration services in those areas. Employment, housing, and drug-treatment services are especially important.

Recommended measures include:

- Make prevention the focus of citizen security planning, strengthening multi-sectoral coordination and investment in strategies to prevent crime and violence.
  - Focus citizen security strategies on addressing the key factors giving rise to crime, including education, employment, healthy family and community bonds, as well as substance abuse.
  - Engage proactively with civil society and non-governmental organizations in designing and providing prevention services.
  - Identify the neighborhoods to which large contingents of people released from correctional centers return and strengthen key reintegration services in those areas.
- 4. Violence is high in most prisons, with many inmates having either been victimized or witnessed others being victimized. High levels of physical and sexual violence deserve the attention and resources of correctional authorities, and changes should be based on evidence accumulated internationally regarding preventing prison violence and intervention strategies to reduce these incidents.**

The rates of sexual violence in prisons in the Caribbean are higher than in Latin American prisons (Bergman and Fondevila). Interpersonal conflicts are also high. Between 16 percent and 26 percent of the individuals surveyed indicated that they had been attacked or beaten within the previous six months, and from 72 percent to 89 percent had witnessed other inmates being beaten or attacked. The results also show that between 3 percent and 12 percent of inmates had witnessed the sexual victimization of other inmates.

Violence management is also difficult to implement in overcrowded prison facilities, particularly when inmates lack access to basic goods. Scarcity gives rise to infights for controlling the provisions, and the emergence of illegal markets within prisons. Most prisons in the Caribbean have very deficient provision of basic goods such as drinking water, mattresses, linen, and food. Inmates that have visits of relatives can enjoy some support from their families. Excepting Barbados, most inmates in other countries report that the main provider of medicines, clothing, food, and other basic goods are relatives, which implies an additional burden for families who mostly are already poor.

In this regard, main recommendations would include:

- Take measures to reduce overcrowding and idleness, two important predictors of violence.
- Develop programs in which first timer and non-violent offenders are housed in separate facilities.
- Introduce systematic evidence-based strategies to promote environments in which inmates' right to safety is guaranteed.
- Introduce dramatic improvement in health care services and reduce the burden on families.
- Invest in improving quality and quantity of food.

## Introduction

This comparative study seeks to examine survey data collected from the incarcerated population of the Caribbean. It is based on the results of a survey used in interviews with 3,528 inmates in six Caribbean countries: The Bahamas (2016), Barbados (2018), Guyana (2017), Jamaica (2018), Suriname (2018),<sup>1</sup> and Trinidad and Tobago (2018).<sup>2</sup>

The reasoning for conducting a prison survey was the poor quality of the limited information available about the corrections systems in the Caribbean, which severely limits the ability to perform evidence-based diagnoses and to develop informed policies (UNDP, 2012). In addition, the high incarceration rates in several Caribbean countries makes the study of imprisonment even more relevant. Further, instruments used previously to study correctional systems in the Caribbean suffer from problems of validity and reliability and have not been updated systematically (UNDP, 2012). Also, prior studies did not collect information directly from the imprisoned population but relied on official records (CARICOM-PANCAP, 2016; Deosaran, 2013; Robottom, 2009; T&T Prison Service, 2002, 2006, 2010).

Inmate surveys are used to collect data on topics that are difficult to examine through official records, such as the criminal trajectories of inmates, the links between people who commit crimes and their families, membership in criminal gangs prior to arrest, access to weapons and drugs, difficulties related to legal processes and representation, abuse and corruption experienced in detention centers, and the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs implemented in such centers. The administration of prison surveys allows the voices of the “clients” of the correctional system to be heard regarding topics that are usually absent in official documents and records. In addition, surveys can be used to examine the accuracy and validity of other data collected by state agencies. For example, the authorities may wish to examine how police officers act during arrests, how long legal proceedings take, what the living conditions within prisons are like, and many other issues experienced by those in direct contact with the criminal justice system. Surveys can also be used to assess the impact of public policies, such as education and labor programs implemented within prisons.

In developing countries, where legal, police, and prison systems lack reliable information systems, or where the quality of such data is rarely tested, inmate surveys instrument of great value. The two major problems that undermine official data—the lack of data and its reliability—can be overcome by systematically conducted surveys. Despite this, we note that survey data complement systematically collected official data and each source of information is equally valuable and can yield unique insights.

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<sup>1</sup> Suriname is unique among Caribbean countries in that remanded inmates are housed in police stations and in the House of Remand, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Prison Service along with several prisons for convicted inmates. This report focuses on the conditions of all inmates and includes findings from inmates housed at all three types of institutions. The Suriname Inmate Survey, published separately, disaggregates the findings by these three types of institutions. For this report, the findings for inmates on remand in the House of Remand are aggregated with findings of inmates held in other facilities operated by the Prison Service.

<sup>2</sup> The studies in Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Barbados, and Jamaica were funded with IDB grant resources. The studies in The Bahamas and Guyana were funded through loan operations financed by the IDB.

In this context, the survey was intended to contribute to improving Caribbean prison systems by generating information that contributes to designing better-informed and appropriate prison policies.

This report aims to analyze the lives of inmates from their own perspectives, examining a wide array of aspects of life in prison (e.g., access to basic goods, how their needs are met, treatment by prison authorities, respect for basic rights, and drug use), the sociodemographic characteristics of the detainees (e.g., age, education, and gender), and their backgrounds (e.g., family violence in childhood and gang activity in the neighborhoods where they grew up). All of this information attempts to shed light on the life trajectories that pushed inmates toward criminal behavior.

Special emphasis is placed on the problem of recidivism, seeking to identify the conditions that lead prisoners to become repeat offenders. Other issues of particular interest are gender (male/female)<sup>3</sup> and age differences (young/adult inmates) that are linked not only to criminal trajectories but also, for example, to family backgrounds and living conditions within the prison.

This study also explores different aspects of the legal process, analyzing the performance of key actors (i.e., the police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges) at different stages of the criminal justice process. Data from the perspective of the prisoners help us examine the degree of compliance with due process and other aspects of the legal process. In addition, we explore whether there are differences in the treatment received by inmates based on their legal status (sentenced inmates vs. individuals on remand), an essential issue to consider when examining compliance with procedural safeguards.

The results of this study suggest several interventions that are needed throughout the criminal justice system to improve the daily lives of inmates. The study generates inputs for future public policies regarding prison institutions and, in more general terms, for criminal justice systems. A number of conclusions drawn from this study regarding the state of Caribbean prisons and criminal justice systems more generally indicate paths to follow when designing policies to improve the situation of prisoners. The findings and recommendations also suggest ways to improve prison management, allocating scarce resources to where they are needed most, potentially reducing the high costs of prisons for Caribbean governments.

This study of the prison population in the Caribbean accounts for the context in which this population exists, particularly the evolution of prison systems and crime in these countries. Thus, a brief description of the prison systems in the Caribbean is presented below, including a number of indicators related to the evolution of crime in this region.

### The Evolution of Prison Systems and Crime in the Caribbean

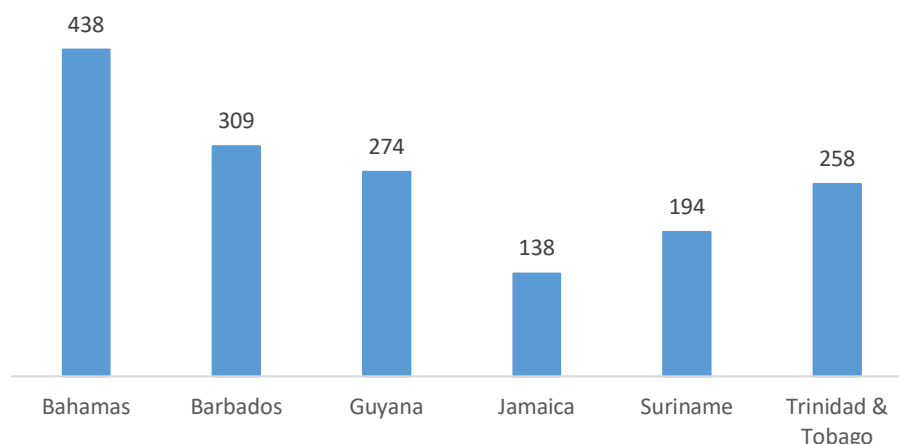
The prison population in Latin America and the Caribbean grew exponentially between 1995 and 2012, increasing from 101 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants to 219, or an increase of 116 percent over this period (IDB, 2017a). All of the Caribbean countries examined in this study, except Jamaica, have incarceration

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<sup>3</sup> Women are overrepresented in the sample to achieve a sample size sufficient for tests of statistical significance. As such, a gender weight was used to correct possible biases arising from the overrepresentation of the female population. In this case, the results presented were adjusted by the real male/female ratio in the prison population.

rates well above the international average of 145 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants. According to the most recent records, the incarceration rates range from 438 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants in The Bahamas (2016) to 138 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants in Jamaica (2015) (World Prison Brief, 2018) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Imprisonment Rate per 100,000 Inhabitants**



Source: World Prison Brief (2018)

While aggregated incarceration rates increased dramatically in Latin America and the Caribbean from 2000 onwards, the rates in four of the six countries studied here (The Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica) decreased during that time; the rates in Guyana and Suriname increased.

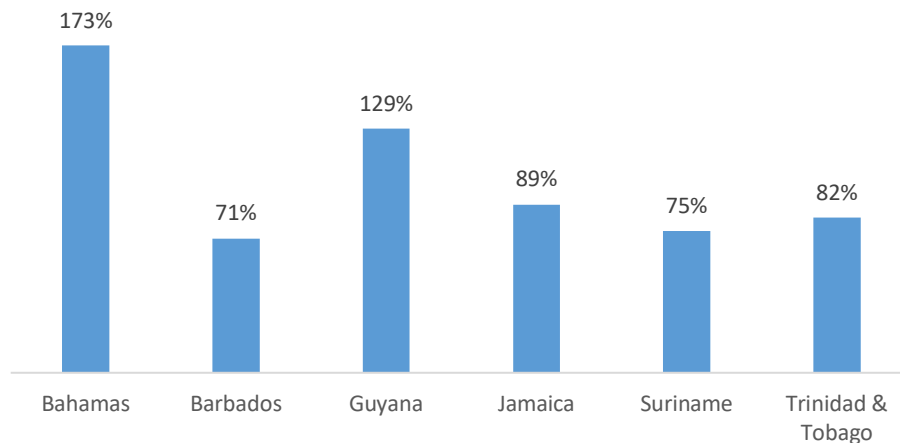
We also note that, despite the decrease in the incarceration rate from 473 in 2000 to 438 in 2016, The Bahamas still had the 12<sup>th</sup> highest incarceration rate in the world based on information available in 2018 (World Prison Brief, 2018). The 15 countries with the highest incarceration rates worldwide includes one Latin American country and six Caribbean islands: El Salvador (604), the U.S. Virgin Islands (542), Cuba (510), the British Virgin Islands (470), The Bahamas (438), Grenada (435), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (426) (World Prison Brief, 2018). This highlights the tendency of Caribbean countries to use incarceration to a greater degree than countries in other regions.

Regarding the number of detention centers, the most up-to-date data indicate that Suriname has 31 centers,<sup>4</sup> Jamaica has 11, Trinidad and Tobago has nine, Guyana has five, and both The Bahamas and Barbados have only one prison facility (World Prison Brief, 2018).

Regarding the occupancy rates<sup>5</sup> of the correctional systems in the countries studied, the most up-to-date data indicate overcrowding in the prisons in The Bahamas (173 percent) and Guyana (129 percent) in 2016 (World Prison Brief, 2018) (Figure 2).

<sup>4</sup> In Suriname there are 5 prisons and 26 temporary detention centers.

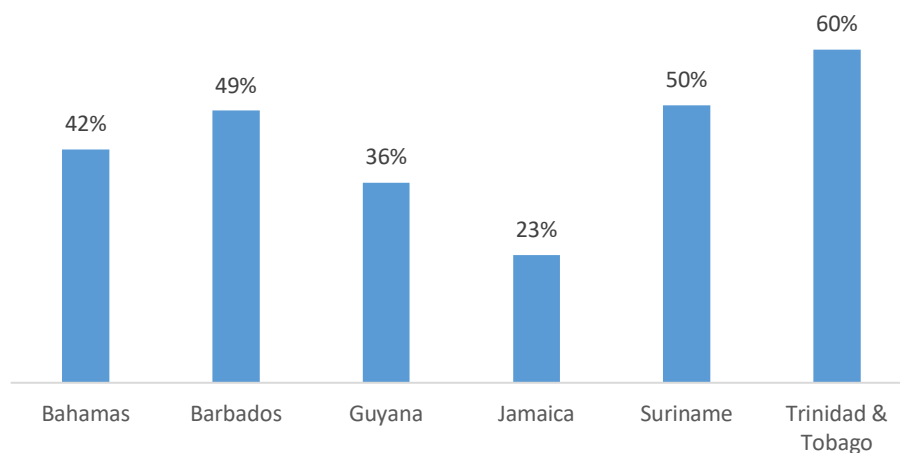
<sup>5</sup> Occupancy rates are calculated as a percentage, with the number of prisoners housed divided by the official capacity of the prison system.

**Figure 2: Prison Occupancy Rates**

Source: World Prison Brief (2018)

Overcrowding (a prison houses more inmates than the capacity for which it was designed) is a key indicator of the state of the Caribbean penitentiary systems. The evidence regarding Latin America and the Caribbean shows that populations housed in prisons where there is overcrowding suffer from water and food shortages, insufficient space, poor health systems, poor ventilation, management problems (due, among other reasons, to the lack of personnel) and violence between inmates and between prisoners and staff (Bierie, 2012; Carranza, 2014; IACHR, 2017). These problems contribute to riots, violence, and recidivist trajectories (García-Guerrero and Marco, 2012; Huey and McNulty, 2005; Jewkes, 2011; Van Ness, 2001). Such conditions also contribute to the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV, pneumonia, and tuberculosis (Ayala, Garay, Aragon, et al., 2016; García-Guerrero and Marco, 2012). Further, overcrowding hinders adequate segregation of violent and non-violent offenders, facilitating incidents of violence and hampering the integration of inmates into rehabilitation programs (Limoncelli, Mellow, and Na, 2019).

Another indicator of interest is the percentage of prisoners on remand (i.e., they have been charged but not yet convicted) relative to those who have been convicted and sentenced (Figure 3). According to the most up-to-date data available, Trinidad and Tobago has the highest percentage of inmates on remand (60 percent in 2018), followed by Suriname (50 percent in 2013), with Jamaica having the lowest (23 percent in 2016) (World Prison Brief, 2018). We note that many of the people on remand are held in the same prison facilities as those who are convicted and that are overcrowded. This means that large contingents of people who have not yet been found guilty are deprived of liberty in centers where they are exposed to conditions that threaten their health and safety (Bleich, 1989; Kaufman, 1985; Open Society, 2014).

**Figure 3: Prisoners on Remand**

Source: World Prison Brief (2018)

While crime policies may focus on a range of social interventions or on suppressing crime, the role of the prison system in contributing to the fight against crime is often neglected. For example, factors such as the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration programs, and the effectiveness of incarceration and deterrence can affect crime rates. Effective rehabilitation and reintegration programs contribute to reducing the rate of reoffending. On the other hand, ineffective rehabilitation programs or processes within the prisons that undermine the benefits of rehabilitation programming are more likely to lead to reoffending on release. Similarly, if prisons fail to produce a deterrent effect, the capacity of the prisons to reduce crime on a national level is reduced. The effectiveness of prison systems in the Caribbean, therefore, can be understood by examining crime data.

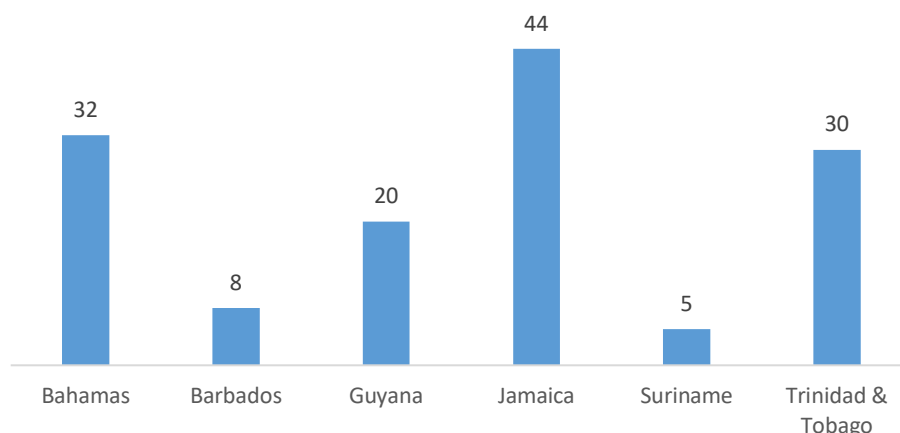
Despite having one of the highest imprisonment rates in the world, the Caribbean region suffers from a higher than world average homicide rate—16 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants compared with 6 globally (UNODC, 2013)—indicating that imprisonment has a low deterrence effect on crime in the region. The homicide rates of the Caribbean islands are usually above those of countries in the Southern Cone but below those of their Central American neighbors (IDB, 2017a); however, there is significant variability within the Caribbean region.

Jamaica stands out for its very high homicide rates (44 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2013, a year in which Jamaica had the sixth highest homicide rate in the world, see Figure 4) (UNODC, 2013), which increased between 2000 and 2009, when it reached its all-time high of 62. Another country that has attracted regional attention is Trinidad and Tobago. While its homicide rate remained relatively low prior to the 2000 (below 10 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants), it began to climb and reached its peak in 2008 (42), declining to 30 in 2013 (IDB, 2017b). In The Bahamas, the homicide rate has increased significantly in recent years, from 25 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000 to 32 in 2014, well above the regional average (16) and approaching the high rates in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago (IDB, 2017a). The homicide rates in Barbados (8 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2013) and Suriname (5 in 2013) have remained relatively stable since 2000 at substantially lower levels than other Caribbean countries. Suriname had the



lowest homicide rate of the six countries examined and was below the global average of 6 per 100,000 inhabitants (UNODC, 2014). Finally, the homicide rate in Guyana (roughly in the middle of the group of six countries) rose from 10 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2000 to 20 in 2013 (IDB, 2017a).

**Figure 4: Homicides per 100,000 Inhabitants\***

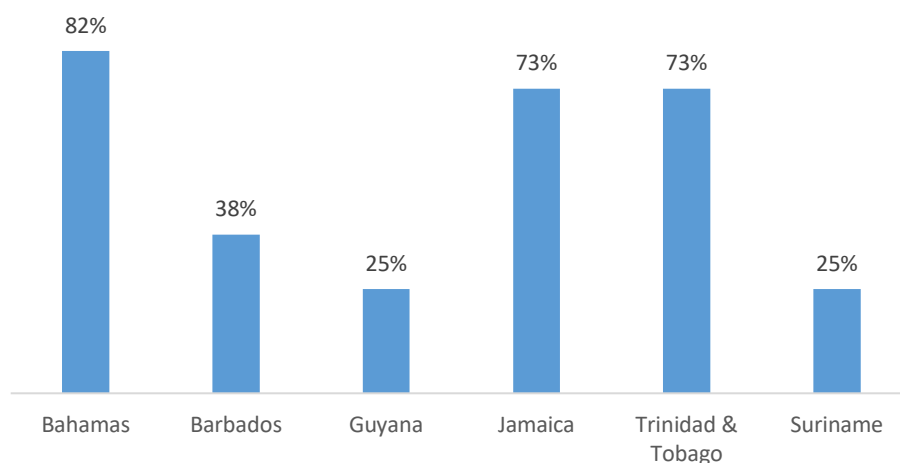


Source: IDB (2017a)

\* All rates are for 2013 except for The Bahamas, which is for 2014.

In 2015, the Caribbean had the second highest percentage in the world of homicides committed with firearms (65 percent) after Central America, which contrasts sharply with regions such as Europe, where 24 percent of homicides were perpetrated with firearms in 2015 (IDB, 2017b). Disaggregating Caribbean data by the countries studied (Figure 5), the highest percentage of homicides committed with firearms occurred in The Bahamas (82 percent), while the lowest percentage was in Suriname and Guyana (both at 25 percent) (Homicide Monitor, 2015). We note that the three countries with the lowest homicide rates committed with firearms and where knives are used more than or as commonly as firearms—Barbados, Suriname, and Guyana—are also the countries with the lowest homicide rates.

**Figure 5: Homicides Committed with Firearms**



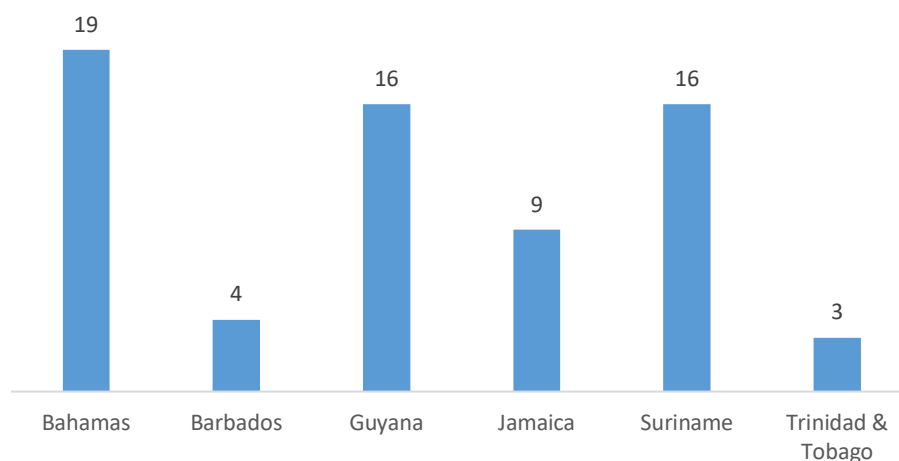
Source: Homicide Monitor (2015)

Regarding the evolution of other types of crimes in the countries studied in this report, victimization surveys carried out in the Caribbean in 2014 and 2015 indicated that 4.8 percent of the population experienced a robbery in the year prior to the survey, a figure below the global average of 8.1 percent (LAPOP, 2014, 2015). Looking specifically at capital cities, 4.1 percent of households experienced robberies during the previous year, similar to the global average (4.5 percent). Regarding theft with the use or threat of violence, 2.7 percent of the population residing in Caribbean metropolitan capitals were victims, which was slightly below the global average of 2.9 percent. This figure was particularly high in New Providence in The Bahamas (4.0 percent) and in Port of Spain in Trinidad and Tobago (3.5 percent). Theft with the use of force was less frequent in the Caribbean than in capital cities of Latin America, where the average was 4.7 percent (LAPOP, 2015).

In contrast with property-related crimes, the LAPOP (2015) showed that crimes of aggression or threat of aggression were much higher in the Caribbean (6.8 percent) than in other parts of the world (international average of 4.4 percent) and than in any other region in the world included in the LAPOP study, including seven Latin American cities and 10 African cities. The three Caribbean cities with the highest rates of victimization for aggression or threat of aggression were New Providence (The Bahamas) at 8.8 percent, Kingston (Jamaica) at 8.3 percent, and Bridgetown (Barbados) at 6.1 percent (LAPOP, 2015).

In relation to access to firearms by civilians in the six countries of interest (Figure 6), the list is headed by The Bahamas, with 19 weapons per 100 inhabitants, followed by Suriname (16), Guyana (16), Jamaica (9), Barbados (4) and Trinidad and Tobago (3) (Small Arms Survey, 2017). The survey data showed no clear relationship between the homicide rate and the rate of firearms in the hands of civilians. For example, while Suriname had the lowest homicide rate and the highest rate of firearms in the hands of civilians among the six countries examined, Trinidad and Tobago had one of the highest homicide rates and the lowest rate of firearms in the hands of civilians.

**Figure 6: Number of Firearms Owned by Civilians per 100 Inhabitants**



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

## Country Comparison<sup>6</sup>

### Sociodemographic Characteristics

This section examines the sociodemographic characteristics of inmates in the six Caribbean countries studied. We focus on the ages of the inmates, whether inmates had children and whether they had children at a young age, whether inmates had partners also in prison, inmates' level of education, employment status, and childhood experiences, including domestic violence, early disengagement from the family home, alcohol and drug use in the family home, family contact with the criminal justice system, and characteristics of the childhood neighborhood. A detailed analysis of these factors will provide a better understanding of the sociodemographic profile of inmates and how this might relate with offending patterns. As such, these factors may serve as important predictors or risk factors for criminal offending and recidivism. Risk factors for offending often refer to conditions, variables, or characteristics that predict an increased probability of engaging in criminal behavior and that differentiate offenders from non-offenders. In this sense, risk factors can be summarized as (Farrington, Loeber, and Ttofi, 2012; Howell and Hawkins, 1998):

- individual characteristics such as age, education, impulsivity, and self-control
- family influences such as social bonding and attachment with family members, and child rearing practices
- social factors such as peer influences, school attachment and community norms

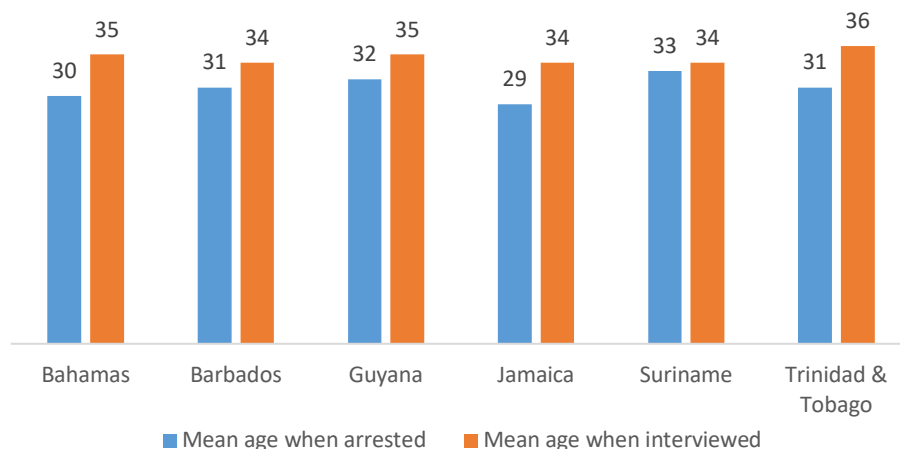
Therefore, the variables in this section provide useful insights into factors that may help explain criminal behavior in the Caribbean.

### Age

The average age of the prison population (Figure 7) in each of the countries surveyed was between 34 and 36 years of age, with Trinidad and Tobago having the highest average age, at 36 years. The average age of imprisonment ranged from 29 to 33 years, with Jamaica standing out with the lowest average age of imprisonment (29 years) and Suriname with the highest (33 years). Of those inmates who had been imprisoned previously, the average age of original incarceration was 24 in Jamaica, 26 in Trinidad and Tobago, 25 in Guyana, 18 in The Bahamas, 25 in Barbados, and 26 in Suriname.

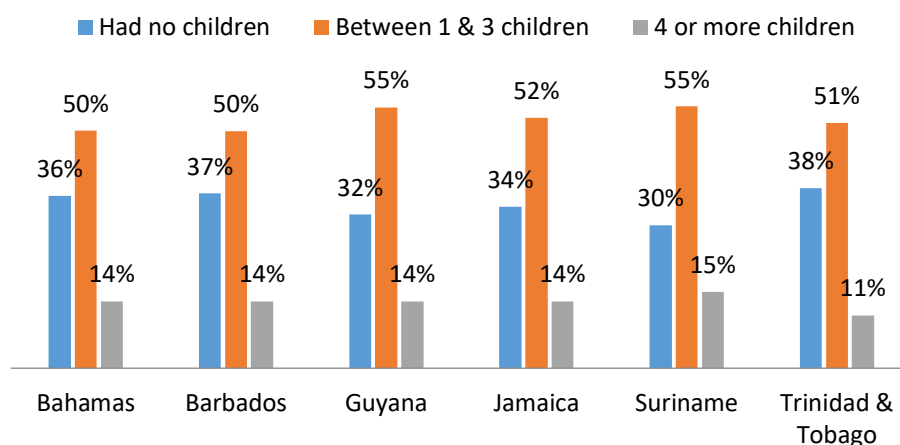
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<sup>6</sup> The data we report from the inmate surveys excludes the *don't know or no answer* responses from interviewees. Therefore, all estimates from the surveys were done after filtering these categories as missing values.

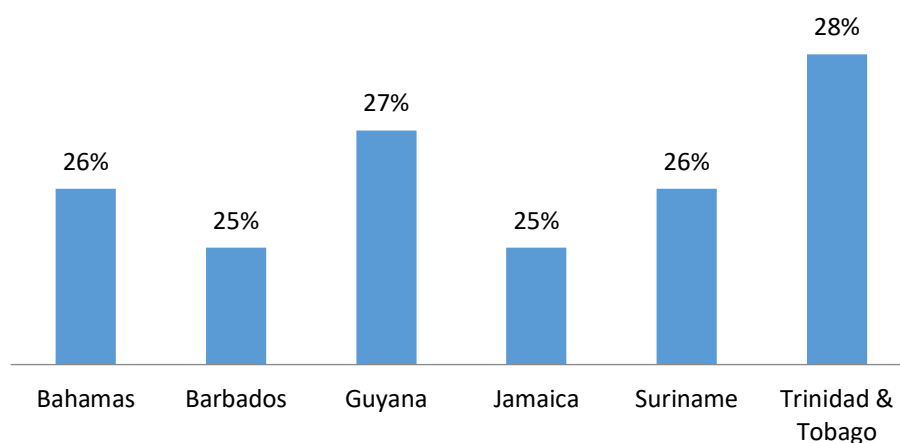
**Figure 7: Age**

### Children

In all countries, two-thirds or more of the prison population had children, with most inmates having between 1 and 3 children (Figure 8). Only a small proportion of the inmates had 4 or more children, with Suriname have the most (16 percent) and Trinidad and Tobago have the least (11 percent).

**Figure 8: Number of Children**

About a quarter of the inmate population had their first child during their adolescence (Figure 9). While Trinidad and Tobago had the lowest percentage of inmates with children (Figure 8), it had the highest proportion of adolescent parenthood (28 percent). However, the differences between countries were not pronounced (Figure 9), with the range of adolescent parenthood ranging from 28 percent in Trinidad and Tobago to 25 percent in Jamaica and Barbados.

**Figure 9: Had First Child at 18 or Earlier**

It is relevant to place figures on adolescent maternity and paternity in the broader context of the countries in which these surveys were conducted. The most recent figures available from 2017 indicate that the adolescent fertility rate in The Bahamas was 26.7 births per 1,000 women between 15 and 19 years old (i.e., 2.7 percent of female adolescents); Trinidad and Tobago, 30.0 (3.0 percent); Barbados, 37.2 (3.7 percent); Suriname, 46 (4.6 percent); Jamaica, 52.7 (5.3 percent); and Guyana, 85.8 (or 8.6 percent).<sup>7</sup> We note that the global average for teenage fertility in 2017 was 43.9 (4.4 percent), thus The Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago were below the global average in 2017, and Guyana, Jamaica, and Suriname were above this average, with Guyana standing out as the Caribbean country studied with the highest adolescent fertility rate.<sup>8</sup>

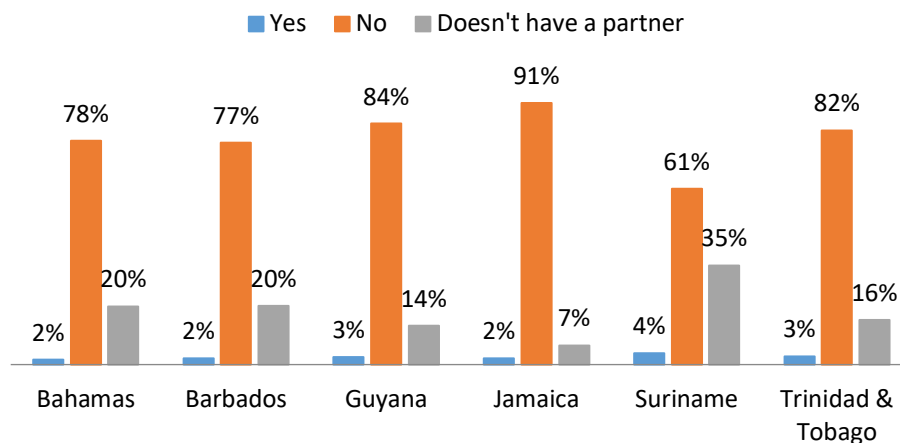
The figures provided by the inmate surveys and those relating to the general populations highlight that, while there is great heterogeneity in the Caribbean in terms of adolescent fertility—from 2.7 percent of adolescents in The Bahamas to 8.6 percent in Guyana—the prison populations were much more homogenous, with the percentage ranging between 25 and 28 percent. Looking at the data from the countries studied for this report, the disparities are very large. For example, while 2.7 percent of adolescents in The Bahamas had children before they were adults, 26 percent of the inmates interviewed in that country had had a child during adolescence. Although these indicators are not directly comparable, they suggest much more vulnerability in the prison populations than in the general populations. This issue will be discussed in more detail later in this report in the section on factors associated with recidivism.

### Partners

The proportion of incarcerated individuals whose partners were also in prison was very low in all countries (between 2 percent and 4 percent), though most inmates (between 65 and 93 percent) had a partner at the time of the interview (Figure 10). Suriname had the highest proportion of inmates who did not have a partner at all (35 percent).

<sup>7</sup> See World Bank Open Data for 2019 at <https://data.worldbank.org/>.

<sup>8</sup> See World Bank Open Data for 2019 at <https://data.worldbank.org/>.

**Figure 10: Partner in Prison**

## Education

In all countries, the majority of the prison population had a low level of education (Table 1), with between 59 percent (in Barbados) and 81 percent (in Guyana) of the respondents having never completed their secondary education. Some relevant differences were observed between the countries. The lowest levels of education were in Guyana and Suriname, where roughly a quarter of the inmates interviewed had completed primary school or less. This may reflect the comparatively low gross domestic product per capita in these two countries (IMF, 2018), since lower gross domestic product may result in lower expenditures and therefore less access to education and other services.

**Table 1: Level of Education before Arrest (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Complete primary or less	3	5	26	15	27	21
Incomplete secondary	61	54	55	50	42	40
Complete secondary	25	26	12	22	10	25
More than secondary	7	4	4	5	6	5
Technical vocational/Vocational	4	12	4	9	15	9

It is important to compare these figures with those of the general population in the countries examined (note that there is no relatively updated education data available for the general population in Guyana). In Suriname, the most up-to-date data (2012) indicate that the highest percentage of the population over 25 had incomplete secondary education (33 percent), below the figure for the inmate population (42 percent) (UNESCO, 2019). This figure is not directly comparable because of the different years of the cited data and because it refers to the population over 25 years of age; however, the data suggest that inmates are not educationally disadvantaged compared to the general population.

On the contrary, in The Bahamas and Barbados, and to a lesser extent in Jamaica, the prison population appears to be disadvantaged compared to the general population when it comes to educational attainment. We were able to source relatively up-to-date data from The Bahamas (2010) and Jamaica (2011) to compare the educational levels of the prison population with those of the general population. In both countries, the largest proportion of the population older than 25 years completed secondary education (The Bahamas, 50 percent in 2010; Jamaica, 44.7 percent in 2011 [UNESCO, 2019]). By comparison, only about a quarter of the prison population in those two countries completed secondary education.

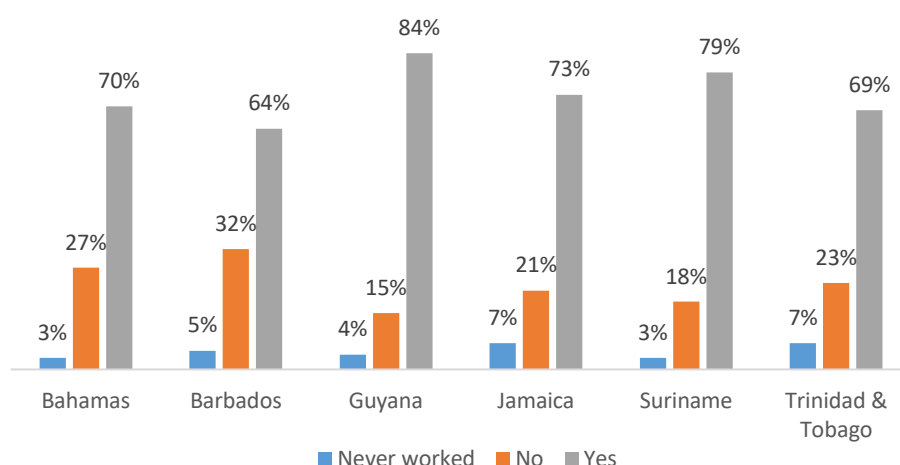
In Trinidad and Tobago, the most commonly reached education level in the general population was post-secondary non-tertiary education (34 percent in 2009) (UNESCO, 2019). The largest proportion of the prison population (40 percent) had not completed their secondary education, and only 5 percent did post-secondary education.

### Work

Almost all of the inmates surveyed had some type of work experience. While the proportion of inmates who had never worked was very low in all countries, there were differences. In The Bahamas and Suriname, only 3 percent of the respondents had no work experience compared to 7 percent of the inmates in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

There were also differences among countries in inmates' employment situations at the time of their imprisonment. The percentage of inmates who worked in the month prior to their incarceration ranged from 64 percent in Barbados to 84 percent in Guyana (Figure 11). Barbados showed the most unfavorable employment situation of the six countries, with 32 percent of the inmates interviewed having been unemployed at the time of their arrest and 5 percent having never worked. Unemployment in the month prior to arrest ranged from 32 percent in Barbados to 16 percent in Guyana.

**Figure 11: Worked in the Month Prior to Detention**



It is instructive to compare the unemployment figures of the inmate population with those of the general population (Table 2) (World Bank, 2019).<sup>9</sup> In five of the six countries studied—with Guyana being the exception—the inmates interviewed had faced significantly higher unemployment levels when they were free than the general populations. The largest discrepancies were in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. In Barbados, 12 percent of the general population was unemployed compared to 32 percent of the inmates surveyed having not worked in the month prior to arrest; in Trinidad and Tobago, those numbers were 3 percent of the general population compared to 23 percent of the inmates surveyed. The lowest difference was in Suriname, where 8 percent of the general population was unemployed compared to 18 percent of the inmates. In Guyana, there was no difference, with both populations facing unemployment of approximately 12 percent. It is interesting to note the strikingly low unemployment rate in the general population in Trinidad and Tobago (3 percent).

**Table 2: Unemployment in the General and Inmate Populations (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
	2016	2018	2017	2018	2018	2018
General population	12	12	12	9	8	3
Survey respondents	27	32	12	21	18	23

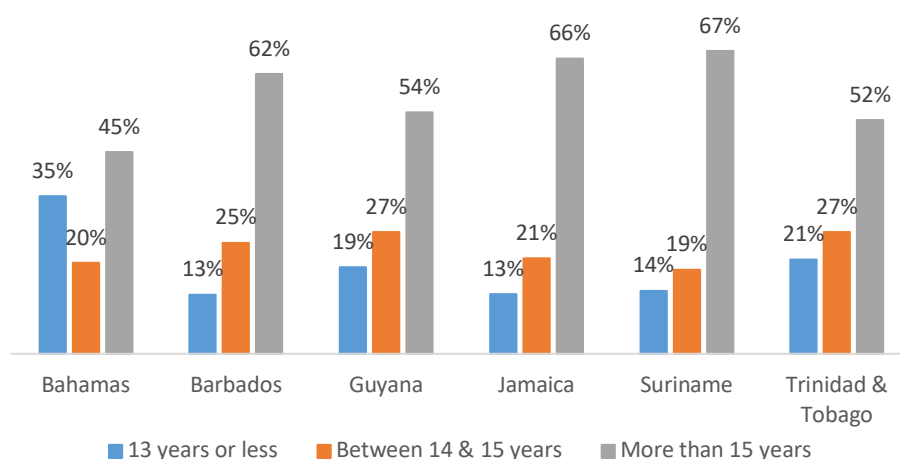
Sources: Inmate survey and World Bank (2019).

Note: The dates are the years in which the inmate survey was conducted in each country.

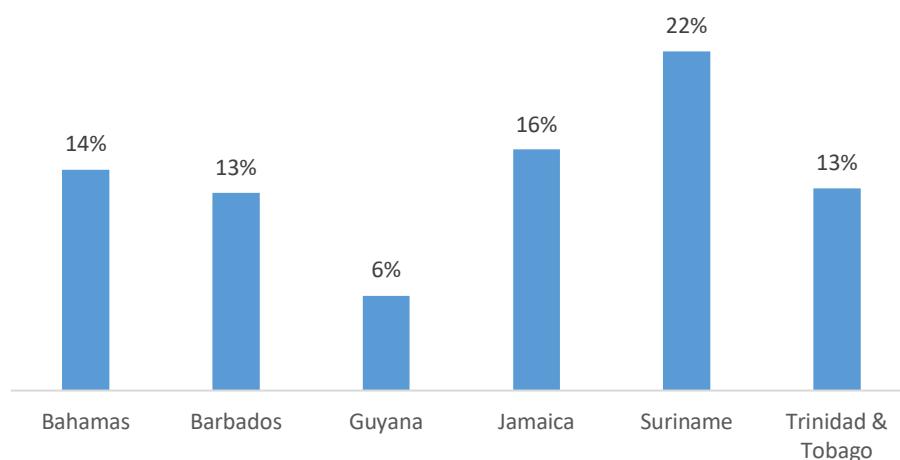
Starting work early in life (prior to 16 years old) was common in all countries (Figure 12), particularly in The Bahamas, where 55 percent of the inmates surveyed entered the labor market before they turned 16 years old, including 35 percent who were 13 years old or younger. The Bahamas was the only country where a higher percentage of the inmates started in the workforce in early (13 years or younger) compared to late (14 and 15 years old) adolescence; in all other countries, most of the inmates who started working young began at 14 or 15 years old. Jamaica (34 percent) and Suriname (33 percent) had the lowest percentage of inmates who started working at an early age.

<sup>9</sup> The unemployment figures for the general populations refer to the rates for people actively looking for work in the year that the inmate survey was done in that country. The data collected by the inmate surveys reflect the percentage of inmates who worked at some point but were not doing so in the month prior to their detention (we assumed they were actively seeking work, but that was not necessarily correct). Also, inmates were incarcerated in various years prior to the survey, therefore, the general unemployment rate was not necessarily the same. As a result, the two data sources may not be perfectly comparable.



**Figure 12: Age of First Paid Work**

In the Caribbean prison population, access to government social programs (measured as receiving money from the state, not including pensions) (Figure 13) ranged from 6 percent in Guyana to 22 percent in Suriname, with the other four countries at between 13 and 16 percent. While there are no data available on access to social programs by the general populations for several of the countries studied, the data indicate that 14 percent of the general population in Jamaica and 13 percent in Trinidad and Tobago received conditional cash transfers in 2015 (ECLAC, 2017). These figures are very similar to those of the majority of the inmate population studied, suggesting that inmates receive conditional cash transfers to a similar extent as the disadvantaged populations of their countries, which are generally the beneficiaries of such programs.

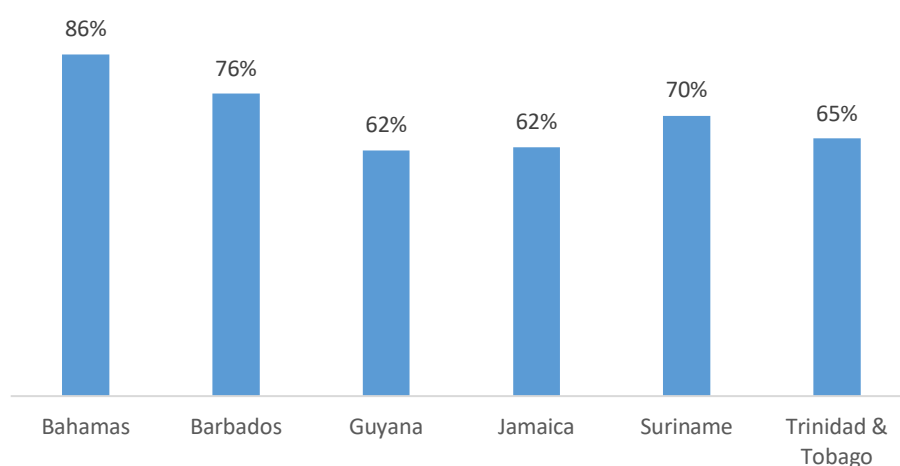
**Figure 13: Family Received Money from Government Social Program in Year Prior to Arrest**

## Childhood

### Domestic Violence

Respondents were asked whether they experienced physical violence personally (Figure 14 and Table 3) during their childhood and if they had seen their mother experience physical violence (Table 3). The results show that within all countries surveyed, at least 60 percent of the inmates experienced physical violence during their childhood, with the highest rates in The Bahamas (86 percent) and the lowest in Jamaica (62 percent) and Guyana (62 percent) (Figure 14). In all countries, family violence was mostly directed only at the child and, to a lesser extent, at both the child and the mother (Table 3). Violence directed only toward the mother was less prevalent, with the highest rate in Trinidad and Tobago (9 percent) and the lowest in Barbados (2 percent).

**Figure 14: Physically Punished by Parents or Guardian**



**Table 3: Domestic Violence (percent)**

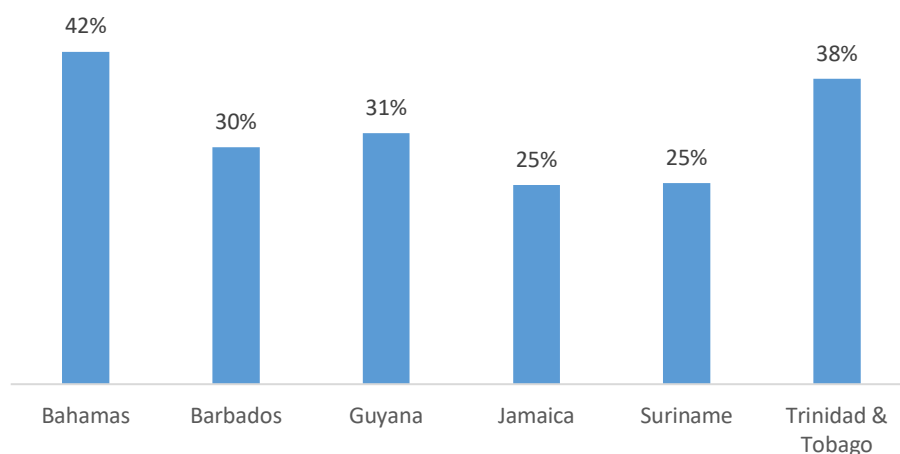
	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Violence against child and mother	31	22	17	17	17	25
Violence against child	54	54	44	45	53	39
Violence against mother	4	2	7	5	4	9
No family violence	11	22	32	33	26	27

It is important to compare these figures with those of the general population in the countries studied. According to a study of attitudes toward violence against children in the Caribbean, 66 percent of the population believed that it is necessary to physically discipline children when they behave badly (LAPOP, 2014), which is close to the lower limit of the percentage of inmates who reported having suffered physical punishment during their childhood. Likewise, a UNICEF study, reported by Sutton and Alvarez 2016, that focused on physical punishment found that the percentage of households with at least one child between 2 and 14 years old who was subjected to severe physical punishment was 4.4 percent in Trinidad and

Tobago (2006), 5.7 percent in Jamaica (2011), 6.1 percent in Barbados (2012), 6.0 percent in Guyana (2010), and 11.8 percent in Suriname (2010) (Sutton and Alvarez 2016).<sup>10</sup>

Violence against mothers was also high, exceeding a quarter of the inmate population in each country surveyed (Figure 15). The Bahamas stands out as the country with the highest proportion of inmates (42 percent) who indicated that their fathers beat their mothers one or more times during their childhood. Of note, The Bahamas was also the country with the highest overall rate of physical violence during inmates' childhoods. Trinidad and Tobago had the second highest rate of abuse against mothers (38 percent), while Jamaica and Suriname had the lowest (25 percent).

**Figure 15: Witnessed Mother Beaten by Father or Partner**



Quite interestingly, national victimization surveys show that the rate of intimate partner violence against women is higher in the general population than in the prison population in Suriname and Guyana, the same in Jamaica, and lower in Trinidad and Tobago. More specifically, the IDB (2016) found that 27 percent of women in the general population in Suriname experienced physical intimate partner violence in their lifetime compared to 25 percent of inmates who said that their mothers experienced such violence during their childhood. In Guyana, these figures were 35 percent of women in the general population compared to 31 percent in the prison population (Contreras-Urbina, Bourassa Myers, Ovince, et al., 2018). In contrast, the rates in Jamaica were 25 percent for both populations (IDB, 2018a). In Trinidad and Tobago, the figures were 28 percent (IDB, 2018b) compared to 38 percent. Note that the estimates derived from the inmates (Figure 15) apply to events that happened in their childhood, while the population estimates are relatively recent estimates of the prevalence of intimate partner violence in each country.

<sup>10</sup> Note that this UNICEF study consulted respondents regarding their experience of severe punishment, while the inmate survey examined here asked respondents about physical punishment in general. Hence, the figures are not directly comparable. Also, given the prison population's exposure to violence in the prison environment and in other areas of their lives, it is possible that the general population considers some acts violent that the prison population, due to their familiarity with violence, would not categorize as such.

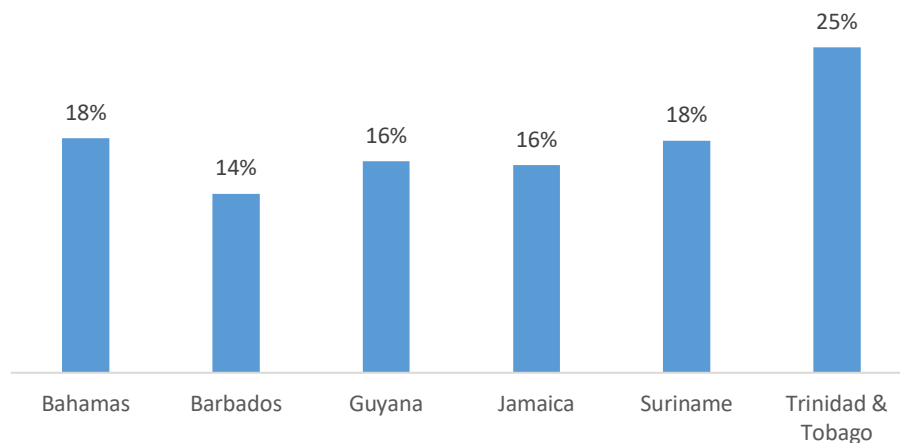
Acceptance of physical punishment as a form of discipline for children and physical force within families are not surprising. In the Caribbean, it is legal for parents to physically punish their children (UNICEF, 2006) and for most of history it was also legally permissible for husbands to punish their wives, though this has been outlawed in the Caribbean. Public sentiment toward physical punishment has been changing, albeit slowly. For example, it was only in 2000 that the use of physical punishment in schools was made illegal in Trinidad and Tobago. While legislation is slowly evolving, cultural shifts take a long time and are more difficult. Much of the population still believes that physical punishment is acceptable and indeed necessary to properly discipline children. The IDB (2016) found that 66 percent of Caribbean respondents felt that it was always, most often, or sometimes necessary to physically punish a child who is misbehaving (75 percent in The Bahamas, 80 percent in Barbados, 65 percent in Guyana, 70 percent in Jamaica, 79 percent in Trinidad and Tobago, and 35 percent in Suriname).

Results of the inmate survey show that many of the respondents experienced physical punishment and/or saw their mother beaten by her partner. Caribbean research has shown that violence against children and violence between parents is related to increases in delinquency and other behavioral and psychological problems in childhood (Baek, Lee, and Seepersad, forthcoming; Seepersad, 2014; Seepersad and Descartes, 2015). For example, a longitudinal study by Samms-Vaughan (2008) found that Jamaican children had high levels of exposure to violence during childhood and that it was a predictor of delinquency and aggression in children. Two-thirds of parents reported that during the previous week they had used psychological aggression against their children and 46 percent reported using corporal punishment. In addition, 22 percent of children witnessed severe forms of domestic violence in the home.

So, studies suggest that violence in the home may be a significant risk factor for criminal offending in the Caribbean and data from the inmate studies show that prisoners in the Caribbean are likely to experience violence in the home and to experience physical punishment as children. Violence in the home and ineffective parenting, may disrupt processes of attachment and social bonding which research has shown to be important predictors of low self-control, aggression, and delinquency (Hirschi, 1969; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). Children who have strong bonds or ties, especially to conventional norms or activities (e.g., family, work, school, church, and sports), are unlikely to be delinquent or behave aggressively. Social bonding and family process are important areas to consider when designing interventions to reduce crime and delinquency within the Caribbean region.

### Early Disengagement from the Family Home

Leaving the family home at an early age was also common among the inmates surveyed (Figure 16), with between 14 and 18 percent of the respondents in most countries leaving home before the age of 15. Trinidad and Tobago stood out, with 25 percent saying they left home before that age.

**Figure 16: Left Home before Age 15 Years**

The reasons for leaving the family home can be aggregated into two groups: family problems (e.g., disputes between family members, disagreeing with family rules, being expelled from home, violence, and addictions) and more tangential problems (e.g., economic problems, the desire to become independent at an early age, beginning of criminal activities, death of parents, or moving with other relatives for unknown reasons) (Table 4). Family problems were predominant in Barbados (66 percent), Trinidad and Tobago (52 percent), and The Bahamas (48 percent). In the other three countries, although the more tangential problems had a greater weight, family problems were still important (Suriname, 43 percent; Jamaica, 39 percent; and Guyana, 37 percent).

Of the family problems, relationship difficulties or disputes over norms (serious but not extreme family problems) were the main reason for abandoning home in Barbados (47 percent), Suriname (34 percent), and The Bahamas (27 percent). In the rest of the countries, it is among the most important but not the main reason (25 percent in Trinidad and Tobago, 21 percent in Guyana, and 17 percent in Jamaica).

Serious family situations (physical or sexual violence and addiction problems) were the most relevant reason for leaving home in Trinidad and Tobago (27 percent) and in Jamaica (22 percent) and the second most important in The Bahamas (20 percent) and Barbados (18 percent). In Trinidad and Tobago, physical violence was experienced by 18 percent of the male inmates but 0 percent of the females, while sexual violence was experienced by 2 percent of the males but 17 percent of the females. In Jamaica, the pattern was the same for sexual violence, with 5 percent of the male inmates experiencing it compared to 13 percent of the females.

Among the more tangential reasons, economic problems (including needing to move to work) were among the most mentioned reasons and the main reason for leaving home in Guyana (31 percent). Also important were family situations like the death of parents or moving in with other relatives, especially in Jamaica (19 percent), and the need to become independent, especially in Suriname (18 percent).

**Table 4: Main Reason Left Home before Age 15 (percent)**

	<b>Bahamas</b>	<b>Barbados</b>	<b>Guyana</b>	<b>Jamaica</b>	<b>Suriname</b>	<b>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</b>
Looking for work	10.2	5.5	28.2	14.8	14.8	8.5
Abandonment or separation of parents	6.8	10.9	11.1	8.0	20.5	13.3
Home expulsion	11.9	20.0	4.3	5.3	4.5	6.4
Death of parents	5.1	0.0	6.8	8.0	8.0	5.9
Alcoholism or drug addiction of parents	6.8	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.6
Domestic violence	8.5	16.4	12.0	16.8	9.1	22.3
Sexual abuse	5.1	1.8	3.4	5.3	0.0	2.7
By or to commit a crime; follow gangs	1.7	7.3	0.9	10.6	1.1	4.3
Exit the state guard system; Changes or adoption	0	0	1.7	3.5	1.1	1.1
Moving in with other relatives	5.1	3.6	3.4	7.1	2.3	0.5
Become independent	5.1	3.6	11.1	5.3	18.2	11.7
Problems/disagreements with the family	8.5	16.4	5.1	3.5	9.1	5.3
Family economic problems	6.8	1.8	2.6	1.8	1.1	3.7
To go or keep going to school	6.8	1.8	0	2.7	4.5	1.1
Other	11.9	10.9	8.5	8.0	5.7	11.7

*Note:* Other reasons included marriage or having a partner and desire to live as a couple, moving to another country, pregnancy, and institutionalization in a juvenile detention center.

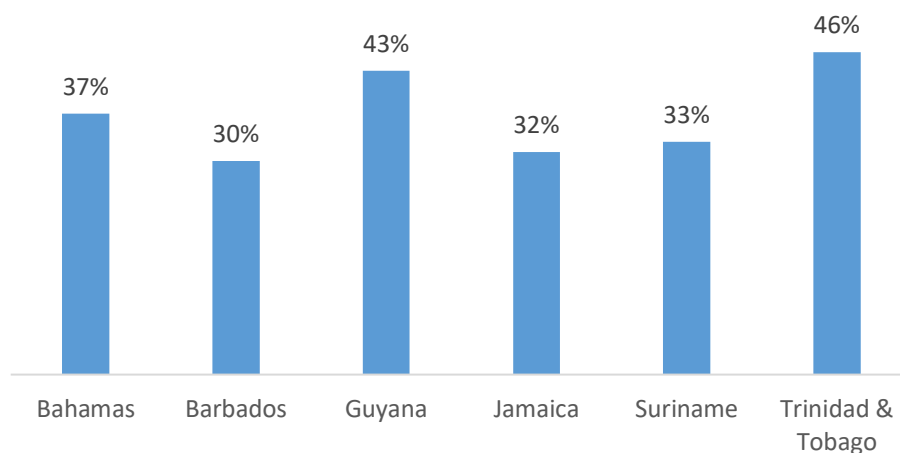
### Alcohol and Drug Use in the Family Home

Except in Trinidad and Tobago, more than half of the inmates indicated that no one in their household used alcohol or drugs frequently when they were children (Table 5). The lowest rates of drug and/or alcohol use were in Suriname (37 percent) and Barbados (40 percent). In contrast, in Trinidad and Tobago 57 percent of inmates indicated that other household members used drugs or alcohol.

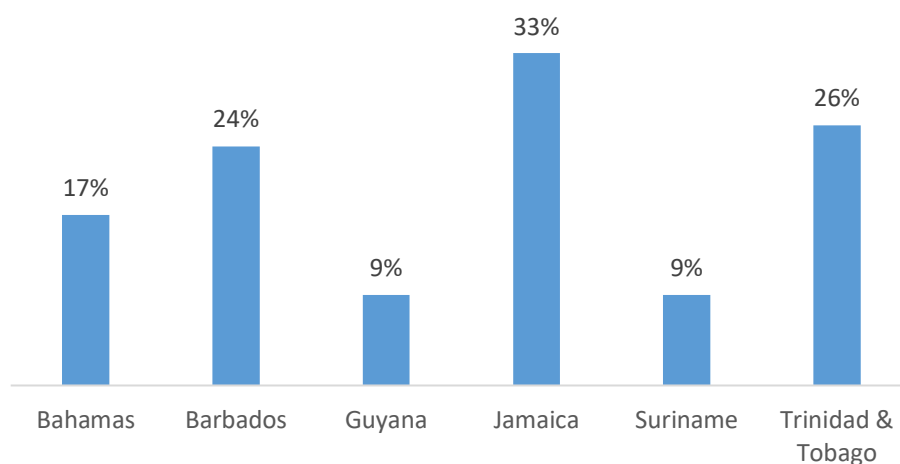
**Table 5: Alcohol or Drugs Consumed in Childhood Home (percent)**

	<b>Bahamas</b>	<b>Barbados</b>	<b>Guyana</b>	<b>Jamaica</b>	<b>Suriname</b>	<b>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</b>
Both types	11	14	6	17	5	15
Only alcohol	26	16	37	15	28	31
Only drugs	6	10	3	16	4	11
None	58	60	54	53	63	43

Between alcohol and drugs, consumption of alcohol was more common, with the highest levels in Trinidad and Tobago (46 percent) and Guyana (43 percent) and the lowest levels in Barbados (30 percent), Jamaica (32 percent), and Suriname (33 percent) (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Parents or Adults in Charge Drank Alcohol Frequently during Inmate's Childhood**

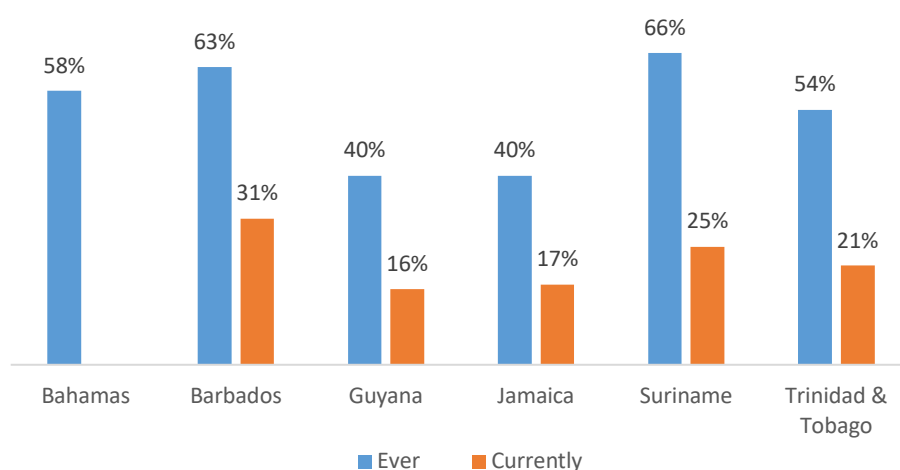
Drug use (Figure 18) affected a much smaller proportion of the inmates' households than alcohol, except in Jamaica where drug use was 33 percent compared to alcohol use of 32 percent. Lower levels of drug use were observed in Guyana (9 percent) and Suriname (10 percent) compared to Barbados (24 percent) and Trinidad and Tobago (26 percent).

**Figure 18: Parents or Adults in Charge Used Drugs during Inmate's Childhood**

Finally, the use of both alcohol and drugs in the inmates' childhood environments was highest in Jamaica (17 percent), closely followed by Trinidad and Tobago (15 percent) and Barbados (14 percent), while it was only 5 percent in Suriname and 6 percent in Guyana.

### Family Contact with the Criminal Justice System

More than half of the inmates surveyed had a family member who was imprisoned at some point, ranging from 66 percent in Suriname to 40 percent in Guyana and Jamaica (Figure 19). The survey results also show that some of the inmates had a family member currently in prison, ranging between 16 percent in Guyana and 31 percent in Barbados (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Family Member in Prison**

*Note:* No inquiries were made regarding relatives currently in prison in The Bahamas.

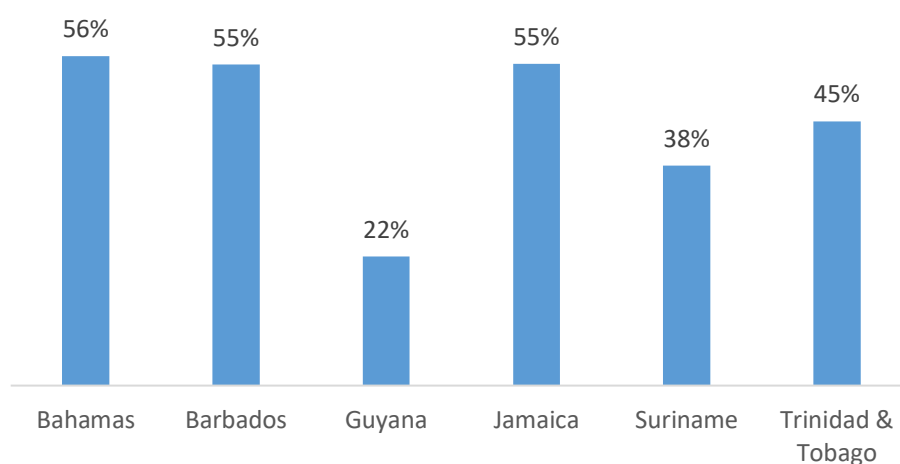
Since many of the respondents had family members in contact with the criminal justice system, family history of crime may be an important risk factor in the Caribbean. International research supports the idea that people who have family members who are imprisoned are themselves at greater risk of criminal offending and imprisonment (Farrington, 1995; Farrington, Gundry, and West, 1975; Farrington, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, et al., 1996; Fleiss, 1981; Farrington and Loeber, 2000; West and Farrington, 1977).

The theory of social learning points out that, like conventional behavior, criminal behavior is learned (Sutherland, 1939). People are constantly interacting with others and may interact to a greater or lesser extent with people whose behavior is aligned with the law or, on the contrary, violates it. The theory of social learning suggests that people are more likely to develop criminal behavior when they learn to define situations more frequently in terms of violating the law than complying with it, a learning process that occurs largely in the family environment. In this sense, criminal behavior is understood as learned in interacting with significant others, who convey motivations, attitudes, and definitions of legal precepts. This theory may be applicable in the Caribbean region and may explain why people with family members in prison or involved in criminal offending may, themselves, be at risk of similar behavior.

### Childhood Neighborhood

Inmates were asked whether there were criminal gangs in the neighborhoods where they grew up (Figure 20). Gangs are an important risk factor since such neighborhoods tend to be economically marginalized and there are pressures for youth to join gangs (Seepersad and Bissessar, 2013). More than half of the prisoners grew up in neighborhoods with gangs or criminal groups in The Bahamas (56 percent), Barbados (55 percent), and Jamaica (55 percent). In Trinidad and Tobago (45 percent) and Suriname (38 percent) this rate was lower, and the lowest incidence was in Guyana (22 percent).



**Figure 20: Gangs or Criminal Groups in Childhood Neighborhood**

### Characteristics of Crimes Committed

This section provides details on the types of crimes for which inmates were incarcerated. The range of crimes committed in each country is examined to determine the types of offenses for which inmates are most likely to be imprisoned. We also examine aggravating issues such as whether physical harm occurred during the crime, whether illegal substances were used prior to the offense, and whether weapons were used. We conclude by examining whether offenses were committed in groups.

### Crimes Committed

The most frequent reason for imprisonment (Table 6) in Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, was homicide, ranging from 40 to 42 percent of the inmates interviewed,<sup>11</sup> followed by robbery (12 percent in Jamaica and 22 percent in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago). In Suriname (45 percent) and The Bahamas (26 percent), robberies were the most common reason for incarceration, though in The Bahamas homicide was a close second (24 percent). In Barbados, the incidence of homicide (26 percent) and robbery (25 percent) was almost equal.

<sup>11</sup> In cases where an inmate indicated that they committed more than one crime, this report refers to the crime of greatest severity.

**Table 6: Crimes (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Robbery	26.3	25.3	22.0	11.9	45.2	21.7
Homicide	23.6	25.8	40.3	41.9	11.0	40.4
Drugs	20.8	17.1	18.9	1.9*	11.0	12.5
Sexual Crimes	7.6	3.7	3.9	10.8	9.4	2.9
Weapons	10.6	9.9	2.6	9.2	0.8	5.7
Others**	11.2	18.1	12.3	24.3	22.7	16.8

\* While Jamaica was a key transit point for drugs destined for U.S. and British markets, this changed considerably between 2000 and 2010 (UNODC, 2012). The UNODC (2012) estimated that 11 percent of the cocaine consumed in the United States came from Jamaica in 2000, declining to 2 percent in 2005 and 1 percent in 2007. The decline in cocaine flow via Jamaica is reflected in the decline in drugs seized from 1,656 kilograms in 2000 to only 266 kilograms in 2008.

\*\* Other crimes included negligence in childcare, arson, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, fraud, money laundering, bribery, violence, and fighting.

### Aggravating Issues: Harm, Substances, and Weapons

We examined three aggravating factors related to criminal offenses: injuries sustained by third parties as a result of the crime, substance use (drugs or alcohol) prior to committing the crime, and the presence of weapons during the crime (Table 7). Most of the crimes committed by the inmates surveyed involved at least one aggravating factor (roughly 80 percent of the crimes), except in Guyana (70 percent) and Suriname (56 percent) (Table 8).

**Table 7: Aggravating Factors (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Physical injuries only	6	11	22	18	11	15
Substances only	15	14	9	3	12	12
Weapons only	9	9	8	12	8	10
With injuries and substances	7	7	8	4	3	8
With injuries and weapons	10	19	16	30	12	19
With substances and weapons	13	8	1	5	5	7
With all three	17	10	5	8	5	10
None	23	22	31	20	44	19

**Table 8: Number of Aggravating Factors (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
One factor	30	34	40	33	31	37
Two factors	30	34	25	39	20	34
Three factors	17	10	5	8	5	10
None	23	22	30	20	44	19

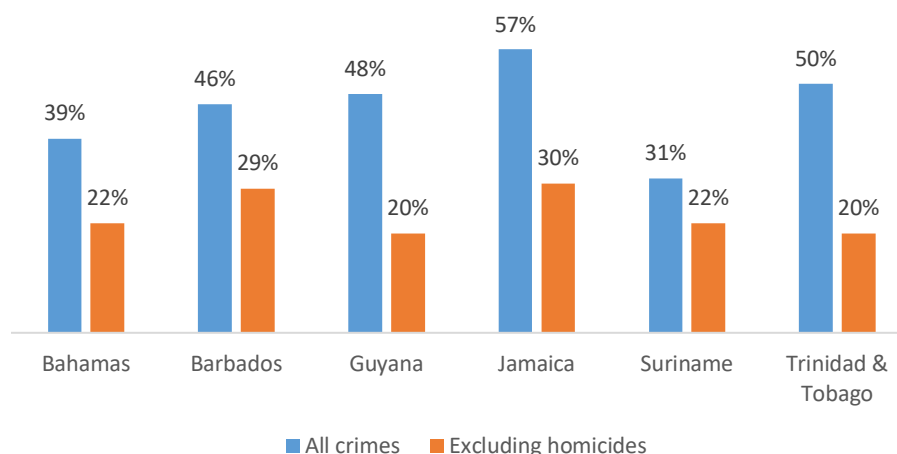
Even excluding homicides, the incidence of aggravating factors is high, ranging from 50 percent of crimes in Guyana and Suriname to 70 percent in The Bahamas and Barbados (Table 9).

**Table 9: Aggravating Factors, Excluding Homicides (percent)**

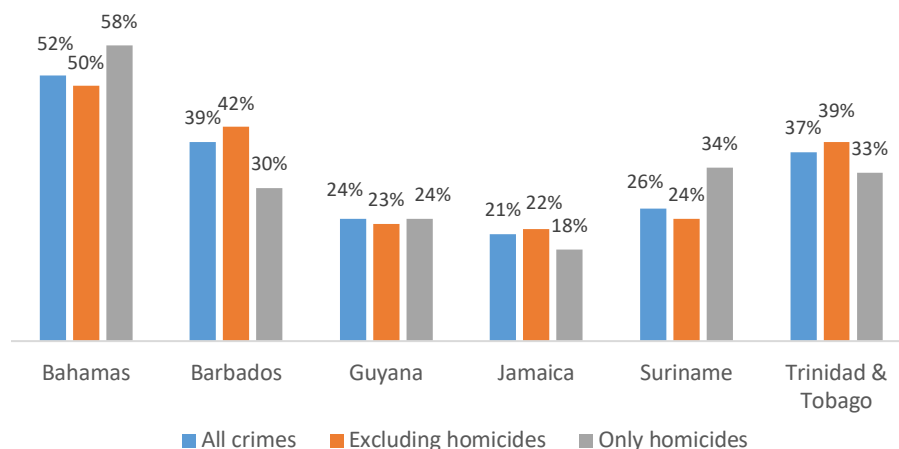
	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
One factor	34	36	36	33	32	41
Two factors	28	26	13	28	14	21
Three factors	8	8	1	5	4	6
None	30	30	50	34	50	32

Specifically looking at injuries caused by the crime (Figure 21), in Jamaica injuries occurred during 57 percent of the crimes compared to 31 percent in Suriname, with Trinidad and Tobago (50 percent), Guyana (48 percent), Barbados (46 percent), and The Bahamas (39 percent) in the mid-range. Excluding homicides, injuries dropped considerably, to around 30 percent in Jamaica and Barbados and roughly 20 percent in the rest of the countries.

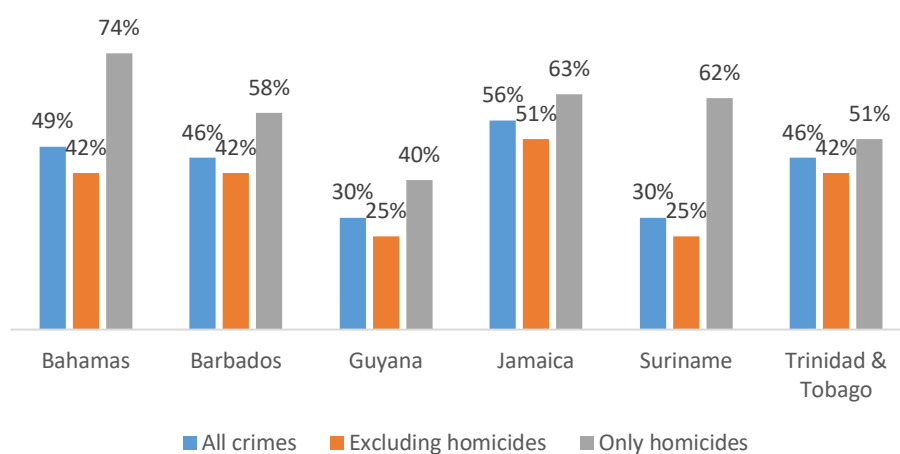
**Figure 21: Crime Caused Physical Injury to Someone**



Substance use prior to committing a crime (Figure 22) was most common in The Bahamas (52 percent) and least common in Jamaica (21 percent), with Barbados (39 percent), Trinidad and Tobago (37 percent), Suriname (26 percent), Guyana (24 percent), and Jamaica (21 percent) between those two points. Looking specifically at homicides, drugs or alcohol were used in 58 percent of homicides in The Bahamas, followed by Suriname (34 percent), Trinidad and Tobago (33 percent), and Barbados (30 percent). Drug or alcohol use was much less prevalent during homicides in Guyana (24 percent) and Jamaica (18 percent).

**Figure 22: Alcohol or Drugs Used in the 6 Hours Prior to the Crime**

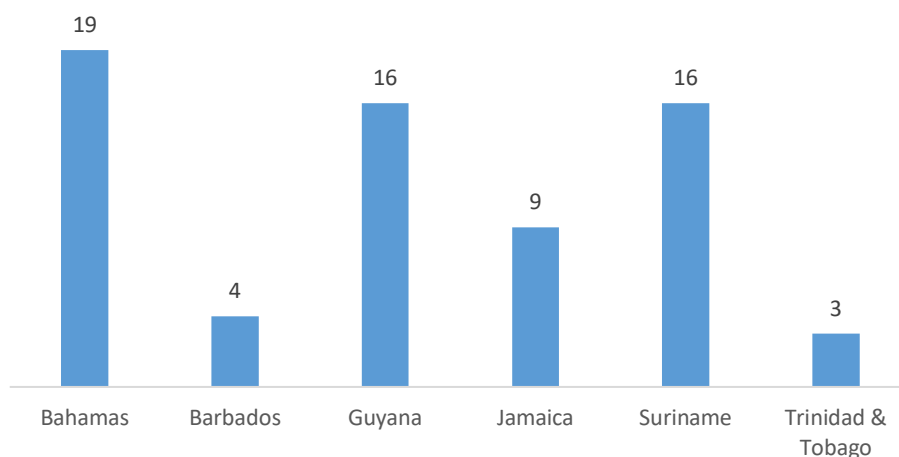
Officials said a weapon was carried during the crime (Figure 23) most often in Jamaica (in 56 percent of all crimes), followed by The Bahamas (49 percent), Trinidad and Tobago (46 percent), and Barbados (46 percent). The lowest rates were in Guyana and Suriname, where weapons were present during 30 percent of all crimes. Excluding homicides, the presence of weapons was highest in Jamaica (51 percent), followed by The Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago (42 percent in each country), and with the lowest incidence in Guyana and Suriname (25 percent in each country). Weapons were more likely to be used in homicides than in other crimes, with the highest rate in The Bahamas (74 percent) compared to the lowest rate in Guyana (40 percent). Note that the lowest rate of weapons use during any crime was in Guyana.

**Figure 23: Officials Said Inmate Was Carrying a Weapon during the Crime**

It is important to place these results in the context of access to weapons (Figure 24). As noted previously in this report, of the countries studied, The Bahamas has the largest number of weapons in civil hands per 100 inhabitants, followed by Suriname, Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago (Small Arms Survey, 2017). However, there is no clear trend in the relationship between possession of weapons by the

civilian population and the presence of weapons during crimes committed by the prison population; this applies to homicides as well as other crimes.

**Figure 24: Civil Possession of Firearms**  
(estimate of firearms in hands of civilians per 100 inhabitants)



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

The Bahamas has the highest rate of weapons in the hands of civilians (Small Arms Survey, 2017) and ranks first in terms of the presence of weapons in homicides and third place in terms of the presence of weapons in other crimes (IDB, 2017a). Thus, in The Bahamas, the high rate of weapons in the hands of the civilian population aligns with the high presence of weapons in crimes committed (IDB, 2017a).

Jamaica is interesting because it has the fourth highest rate of weapons per 100 civilians (Small Arms Survey, 2017), yet it surpasses all other countries studied for presence of weapons in non-homicidal offenses and ranks second after The Bahamas for presence of weapons during homicides. So, even though weapon ownership is not as high in Jamaica generally, weapons are present in all types of crime. It is quite likely that the majority of crimes committed were committed with illegal weapons. While the Small Arms Survey may be able to get an accurate count of legally owned weapons, it is much more difficult to estimate the number of illegal weapons in circulation.

On the other hand, Suriname and Guyana (16 per 100 people in each country) have the highest levels of civilian possession of weapons after The Bahamas (Small Arms Survey, 2017), yet they have the lowest presence of weapons in non-homicidal crimes. Guyana also had the lowest presence of weapons in homicides, while Suriname had the third highest. Thus, although there is a high concentration of weapons in the hands of civilians in these two countries, they are not necessarily used in crimes. At the same time, this could contribute to the explanation for the low homicide rates in these countries, particularly in Suriname.

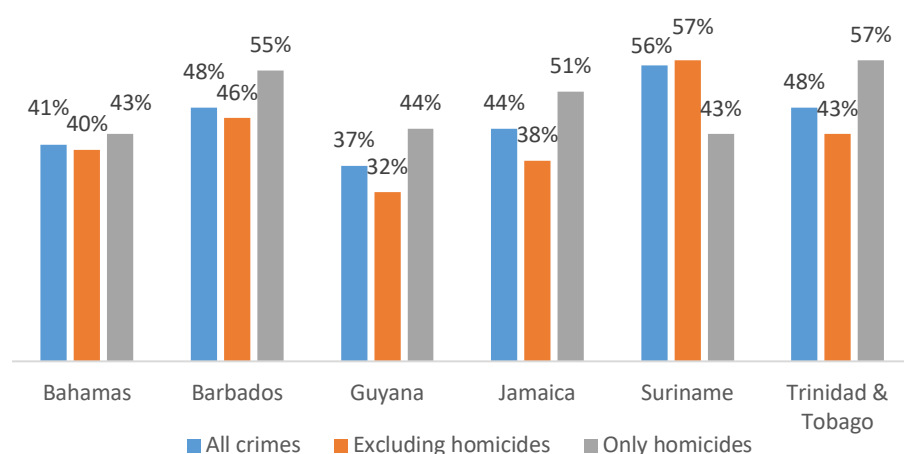
### Crimes Committed in Groups

Some of the crimes committed were carried out with one or more additional people involved (Figure 25), ranging from 56 percent in Suriname to 37 percent in Guyana. Looking only at homicides, the rates were

higher, except in Suriname (43 percent), with more than one person involved in 57 percent of homicides in Trinidad and Tobago, 55 percent in Barbados, and 51 percent in Jamaica.

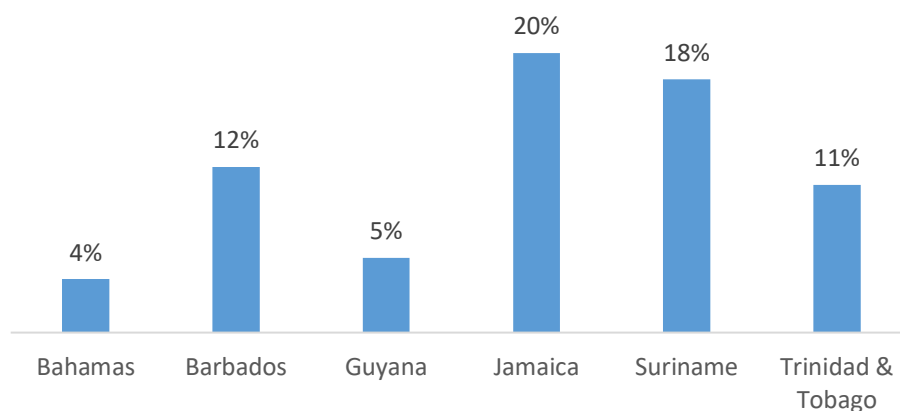
There were gender differences in most countries, with female inmates more likely to have committed their crime with other people. In Jamaica, 49 percent of women reported that other people participated in their crime compared to 43 percent of the men, in Trinidad and Tobago, 62 percent of the women and 46 percent of the men, and in Guyana 46 percent of the women and 36 percent of the men. There were no significant gender differences in The Bahamas, Barbados, and Suriname.

**Figure 25: Other Person(s) Involved in the Crime**



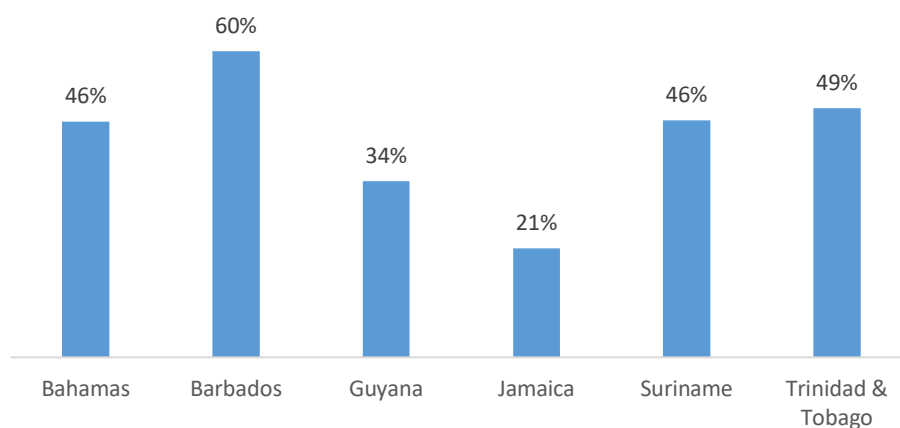
Inmates were asked whether the crime they committed was entrusted to them by a gang (Figure 26). Crimes committed by criminal gangs or groups was below 20 percent in all countries. The highest incidence was in Jamaica and Suriname, where roughly 20 percent of the inmates claimed that their crime was entrusted to them by a gang, and the lowest incidence was in Trinidad and Tobago (11 percent) closely followed by Barbados (12 percent).

It is interesting to compare these figures with those for Latin American countries. Figures for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador are based on surveys of prison populations that had a data collection instrument and methodology equivalent to that used in the Caribbean. In the Latin American countries, 7 percent of the crimes for which people were incarcerated had been commissioned by gangs compared with 7 percent in the Caribbean countries studied. Costa Rica had the highest incidence, at 15 percent, while Brazil and Chile had the lowest incidence, at 5 percent (CELIV Databases, 2013–2016; also see Bergman, Filho, Fondevila, et al., 2013; Bergman, Fondevila, Vilalta, et al., 2014a; Bergman, Massello, and Arias, 2014b; Bergman, Amaya, Fondevila, et al., 2015; Costa and Romero, 2014; Sánchez and Arriagada, 2015). Although the findings indicate that the two regions are very similar, we note that there was greater variability within the Caribbean region than in Latin America.

**Figure 26: Crime Entrusted by a Gang or Similar Group**

### Recidivism: Previous Experiences in Prison

Recidivism, understood in this report as self-reported re-incarceration,<sup>12</sup> was high among prisoners in most of the countries studied, with the highest rate found in Barbados (60 percent), followed by Trinidad and Tobago, The Bahamas, and Suriname (approximately 50 percent in each country, with the lowest levels in Guyana (34 percent) and Jamaica (21 percent) (Figure 27).

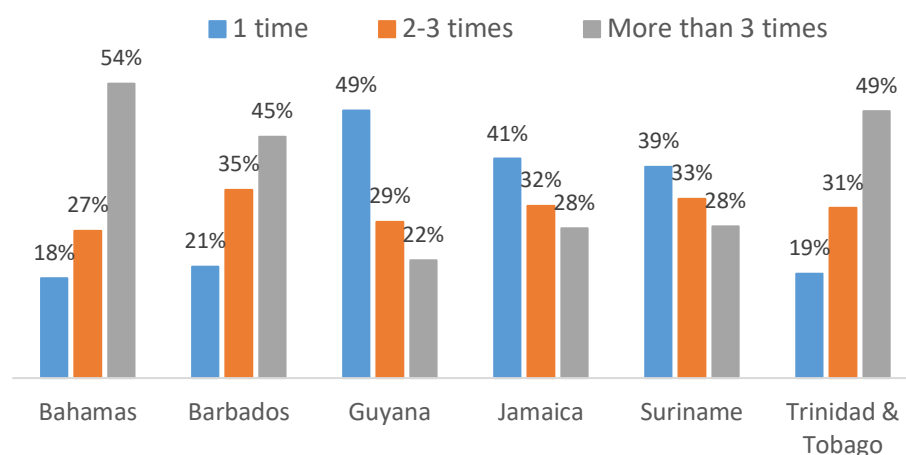
**Figure 27: Previously Imprisoned for Another Crime**

Most of the repeat offenders in all countries have been to prison two or more times before their current incarceration (Figure 28). In The Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago, the largest proportion of

<sup>12</sup> Recidivism can be measured in several ways and can rely on official (e.g., re-arrest, re-conviction or re-incarceration) and self-report data. Sometimes alternative measures are used, including desistance from crime, the severity of the subsequent offense, or specific behavioral changes related to criminogenic behavior.

the inmates (roughly 50 percent) had been in prison more than three times. In Guyana (49 percent), Jamaica (41 percent), and Suriname (39 percent), the largest proportion had been in prison only once previously.

**Figure 28: Number of Prior Incarcerations**



In aggregate terms, 41 percent of inmates surveyed in the six Caribbean countries were recidivists compared to 33 percent in aggregate in the prison populations of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru (CELIV Datasets, 2013–2016). This suggests that the percentage of repeat offenders in the Caribbean is higher than in Latin America.<sup>13</sup>

Looking at the time between the current confinement and the immediately previous incarceration (Table 10), two groups make up most of the recidivists: those re-incarcerated more than two years later and those re-incarcerated within the first year. About half were re-incarcerated more than two years after being released (Jamaica, 59 percent compared to roughly 45 percent in the other five countries), and, except in Jamaica (24 percent), another roughly 40 percent were imprisoned again within a year. In Guyana, Barbados, Suriname, and The Bahamas, roughly a quarter lost their freedom again in less than 6 months, and the very quick return to prison is cause for concern.

<sup>13</sup> Note that both studies included only selected countries and thus the figures may not be representative of each region as a whole. Also, the survey in the Caribbean asked inmates about previous incarcerations, while the one in Latin America asked about previous convictions, thus these variables are not perfectly comparable.



**Table 10: Time Elapsed between Previous and Current Detention (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
3 months or less	11	11	18	7	13	9
4–6 months	9	11	7	5	10	8
7–12 months	17	16	15	12	18	18
13–18 months	6	6	5	1	4	5
19–24 months	12	13	9	16	9	13
More than 24 months	46	44	46	59	46	47

The main financial resources inmates relied on when they were previously released (Table 11) were work and support from family or friends. Together, these two resources supported a minimum of 75 percent (Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) and a maximum of 89 percent (Guyana) of the inmates. Work was the most important resource in Trinidad and Tobago (48 percent), Barbados (45 percent), and Guyana (45 percent), while in Jamaica, family and friends were the most important (51 percent). In Suriname, (37 percent) and Guyana (roughly 45 percent) work and family and friends were equally important. Crime was scarcely referred to as a source of survival, with Trinidad and Tobago having the highest rate at 14 percent.

**Table 11: Source of Livelihood in First Few Months after Leaving Prison (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Family and friends	36	32	44	51	37	27
Work	43	45	45	29	37	48
Robbery, drugs, gangs	9	10	5	3	5	14
Other*	12	13	6	17	21	11

\*Other included self-employment and startups; personal savings; social organizations, state programs, and churches; help from band leaders; begging; and remittances sent by families based abroad.

International research shows that it is not easy for inmates to successfully return to society. Offenders often face numerous challenges on release, both individually and socially (Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005; Visser and Travis, 2012), such as finding a stable place to live, finding and maintaining employment, and reconnecting with family. In addition, they often cannot access social services that will help them with substance abuse and mental health issues (Jonson and Cullen, 2016; Petersilia, 2003; Western, 2008; Visser and Travis, 2012). These findings seem to be replicated in the Caribbean. Results from the survey suggest that the main challenge faced by repeat offenders was finding a job (Table 12), especially in Trinidad and Tobago (38 percent), followed by Suriname (33 percent), Jamaica (30 percent), and Barbados

(27 percent). The second most important challenge was the stigma of being imprisoned,<sup>14</sup> except in Barbados, where the second biggest challenge was not being able to stay out of crime.

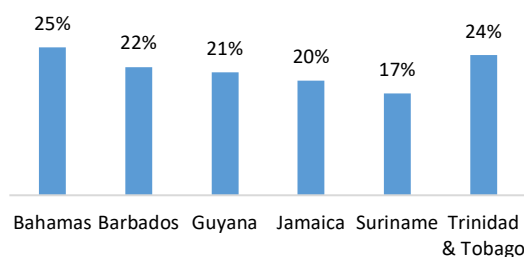
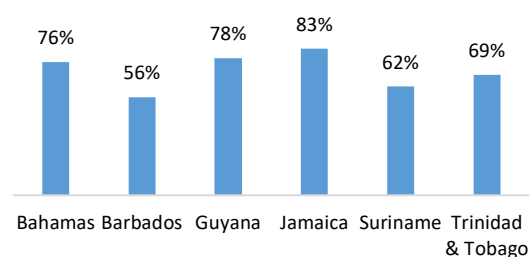
**Table 12: Biggest Challenge Faced on Release to Avoid Current Detention (percent)**

	Barbados	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Not finding a job	27	30	33	38
Not being able to stay clean (away from drugs)	21	5	4	11
Not finding a place to live	6	6	6	4
Unable to reconnect with family, friends	6	3	11	10
Stigma	13	21	33	21
Other	28	35	14	16

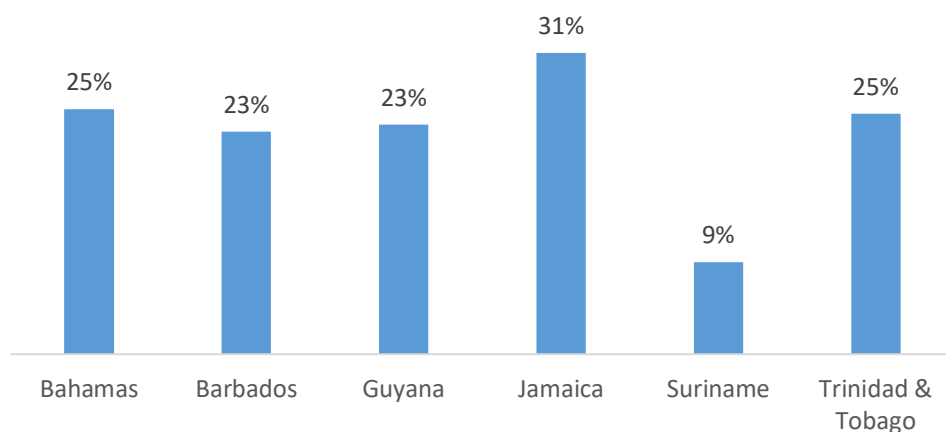
*Note:* No inquiry was made on this point in Guyana and The Bahamas

In all countries, a low proportion of repeat offenders learned a trade during their previous incarceration (Figure 29), ranging from 17 percent in Suriname to 25 percent in The Bahamas. The majority of those who received this type of training found it useful to get a job (Figure 30), especially in Jamaica, Guyana, and The Bahamas, therefore, providing training within prisons must be considered. In particular, new public policies aimed at promoting reintegration and preventing recidivism need to include training since the difficulty in finding a job is one of the main obstacles to staying out of prison. With respect to the Certificate of Good Character mentioned above, for people who were once incarcerated, Caribbean governments could consider including evidence of participation in educational and other rehabilitation programs to help mitigate the effects of stigma and the difficulties in getting employment.

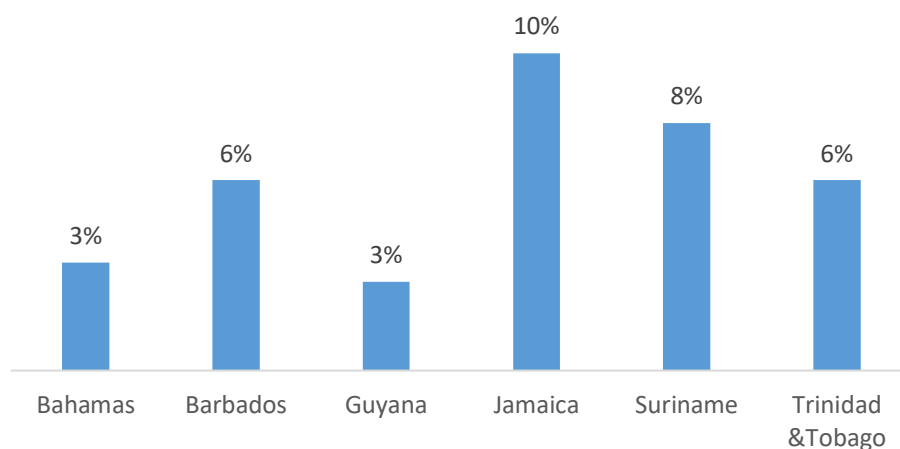
<sup>14</sup> Stigma associated with incarceration reduces the opportunity to access conventional opportunities and to create prosocial bonds, thus increasing the likelihood of reoffending (Durlauf & Nagin, 2011; Denver, Pickett, and Bushway, 2017; Jonson and Cullen, 2016). Apart from this, in several Caribbean countries, people can be asked to provide a Certificate of Good Character when seeking jobs. These are normally sourced from the police and include a criminal background check. A criminal record is reflected on the certificate and may hamper access to employment.

**Figure 29: Learned Trade during Previous Incarceration****Figure 30: Learning Trade Useful in Finding Job after Release**

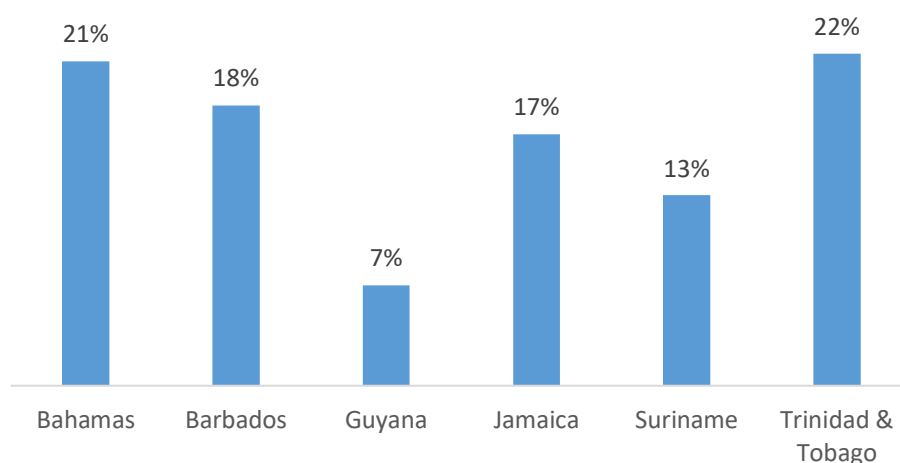
When asked whether they had studied or taken a course during their previous period of incarceration (Figure 31), 31 percent of the inmates in Jamaica indicated that they had but only 9 percent had in Suriname.

**Figure 31: Studied or Took Course during Previous Incarceration**

The level of contact of repeat offenders with organizations that provide support transitioning from detention into the community was very low in all countries (Figure 32), with the highest rate recorded in Jamaica (10 percent) and the lowest in Guyana and The Bahamas (3 percent). It is important to mention that there are a very limited number of organizations that assist inmates with the reintegration process, which is a very serious limitation of the corrections system in the Caribbean.

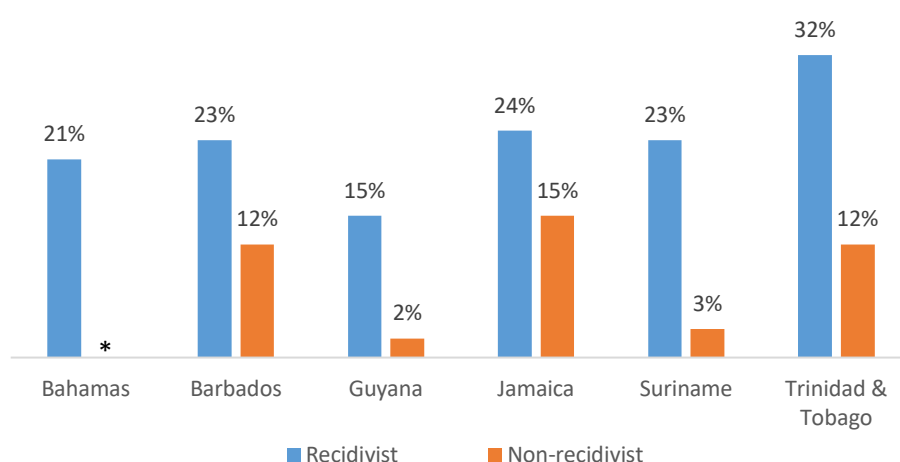
**Figure 32: Had Contact with Organization Providing Support to Released Inmates**

The highest rates of previous incarceration in a juvenile institution (Figure 33) were in Trinidad and Tobago (22 percent) and The Bahamas (21 percent), with the lowest rate recorded in Guyana (7 percent). Of note, while criminological literature acknowledges that incarceration of juveniles may be appropriate under specific conditions, it should be used only as a last resort. In developing the concepts of life-course-persistent and adolescent-limited antisocial behavior, Moffitt (1993) said that only a very small proportion of adolescents, usually less than 5 percent in any given society, may be sufficiently criminogenic such that incarceration is justified. Moffitt demonstrated that the majority of adolescents engaging in delinquent activities do so as a result of a maturity gap, and once such adolescents get older, they naturally desist from offending even without special intervention. Moffitt warned that it is important such adolescents not be drawn into the criminal justice system since this could have a negative impact on their life chances and can channel them to a life of crime and deviance.

**Figure 33: Imprisoned in Juvenile Detention Center**

The survey findings suggest a positive association between youth institutionalization and recidivism in adulthood (Figure 34). More specifically, the results show that recidivists were more likely than non-recidivists to have been incarcerated in juvenile institutions. In Barbados, 23 percent of recidivists compared to 12 percent of non-recidivists were previously incarcerated in juvenile institutions, in Guyana, these numbers were 15 percent compared to only 2 percent, and the findings are similar for the other countries. Further, these results are consistent with international research that shows processing juveniles through the formal juvenile correction system does not prevent or reduce crime among youth. A review by Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, Guckenburg (2013) examined the results of 29 randomized controlled trials and found no evidence that formally moving juveniles through the juvenile justice system controlled crime, and on the contrary, the analyses showed that formal processing increased delinquency.

**Figure 34: Imprisoned in Juvenile Detention Center and Recidivism**



\* This information does not exist in The Bahamas because the question about juvenile centers was only asked of repeat offenders.

The results in this section indicate that recidivism rates are high in the Caribbean and suggest several factors that may contribute to the high levels. A key reason is the lack of access to reintegration support and programming (see Figure 32 and IDB Needs Assessment Studies<sup>15</sup>). Reentry, defined as the process of transitioning from incarceration to society (Travis, 2005), starts the moment an offender is taken into custody and extends beyond release (Maruna and Immarigeon, 2004; Petersilia, 2004). Thus, activities and programs that focus on preparing the offender to leave prison and go back to the community can take place in a correctional setting, and then link with a community program, to provide a continuum of care (Petersilia, 2003; Seiter and Kadela, 2003). The inmate survey shows that, once released, offenders have very little support they can rely on. Non-governmental and civil society organizations may provide some support, but they have limited funding and thus are limited in what they can do and how many prisoners they can assist. The point of release is critical for inmates. If structured interventions and opportunities

<sup>15</sup> The Prison Needs Assessment Studies were done in Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Jamaica, and Barbados; however, the results of these studies were not published.

are not provided, particularly those related to basic needs such as income and accommodation, then inmates will be under pressure to commit crimes to support themselves.

In the Caribbean, too often prison is seen primarily as a way to incarcerate prisoners. Though rehabilitation is also considered important, quite often programs are not carried out in a way that addresses criminogenic needs—factors specific to each individual (e.g., lack of education, drug addiction, and anger management issues) that increase the likelihood that they will reoffend (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, et al., 1990).

The environment to which individuals return is also important. Offenders typically return to a small number of disadvantaged and high crime neighborhoods, which limits their access to social services and to prosocial relationships and activities. These conditions hinder a successful reintegration process (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016).

Finally, the prison environment itself may encourage future criminal offending because of factors related to socialization, such as violence and treatment by prison officials and staff. In itself, the experience of incarceration, regardless of the length of imprisonment, can affect the process of reentry and constitutes one of the most important obstacles to successful reintegration. Research has confirmed that a prison term can increase an offender's recidivism rates when compared with offenders who have non-custodial sentences (Nagin, Cullen, and Jonson, 2009). In addition, incarceration can produce criminogenic effects (Nagin, 2013; Durlauf and Nagin, 2011; Spohn and Holleran, 2002), such as an increase in a person's proclivity to crime, due mainly to the social interactions that occur. Offenders associate with more experienced inmates and learn new crime skills while their prosocial interactions decline (Steffensmeier and Ulmer, 2005 as cited in Durlauf and Nagin, 2011).

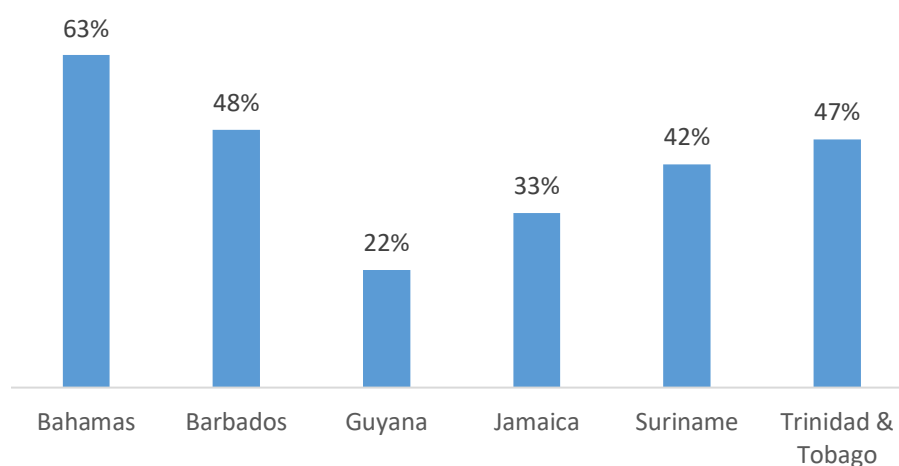
This discussion about recidivism suggests that a holistic approach is required to reduce recidivism rates. In this approach, prisons, or other organizations designated to perform such functions, should focus on factors that reduce recidivism, both while inmates are in prison and after they are released. If Caribbean countries continue to limit the functions of prisons to only what happens within their walls, prisons will continue to contribute to the crime problem by releasing inmates who have a high likelihood of reoffending. Research has consistently shown that the majority of offenses are committed by a small number of offenders (Moffitt, 1993). Tonry and Frase (2001) showed that the majority of inmates are released within relatively short periods of time.<sup>16</sup> Thus prisons are a critical element of crime prevention and can help reduce crime rates and increase of public safety not only while prisoners are incarcerated, but even after inmates are released.

### Criminal Trajectory

Inmates were asked whether they had ever owned a firearm (Figure 35). The highest rate of firearm ownership was in The Bahamas (63 percent) and the lowest rate in Guyana (22 percent).

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<sup>16</sup> The average of the median sentence for all countries studied was 4.3 years. The medians were Jamaica, 8 years; Trinidad and Tobago, 3 years; Guyana, 3 years; The Bahamas, 5 years, Barbados, 3 years; and Suriname, 4 years.

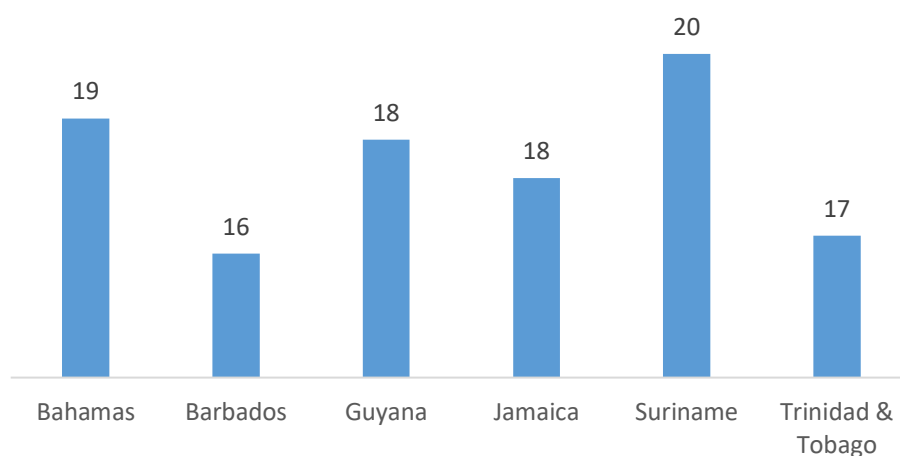
**Figure 35: Has Owned a Firearm**

Inmates were also asked how they got their first weapon (Table 13). The most common answer in most countries was that the weapon was provided by a friend or family member (Jamaica, 55 percent; Barbados, 49 percent; and Trinidad and Tobago, 45 percent, declining to about one-third in the other countries). The second most common means of access in most countries (except The Bahamas where it was the main method) was the inmates buying the firearm themselves (The Bahamas, 43 percent; Trinidad and Tobago, 37 percent; Suriname, 29 percent; Barbados, 26 percent; and Guyana 24 percent).

**Table 13: Source of First Firearm (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Bought it	43	26	24	13	29	37
Stole it	10	10	4	5	9	6
Family/friend gave it to them	32	49	36	55	34	45
Was a police officer or in law enforcement	1	1	26	6	19	3
Other	15	14	10	21	9	10

Finally, the inmates were asked at what age they owned their first firearm (Figure 36). The average age did not exceed 20 years in any of the countries studied, with the earliest average age of ownership in Barbados (16 years) and the oldest in Suriname (20).

**Figure 36: Mean Age of First Firearm Ownership (5 trimmed mean)**

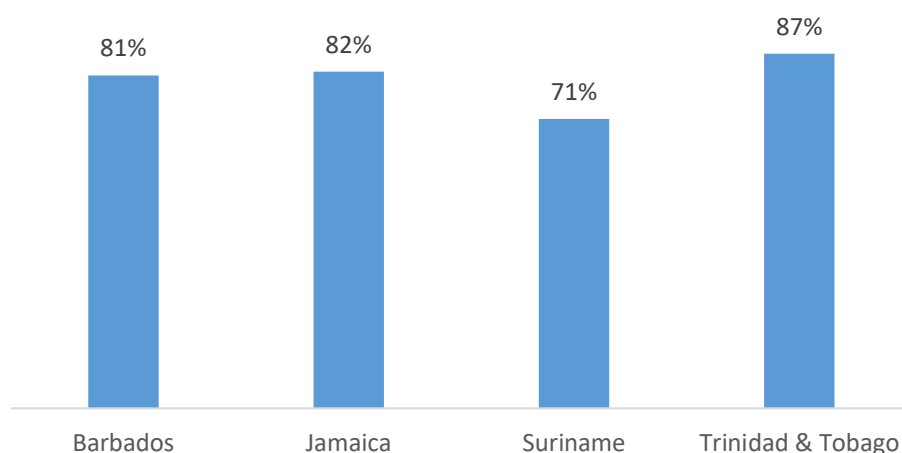
The results also show that most of the prison population that had a weapon obtained it before the age of 18 (Table 14), with most inmates obtaining their first weapon between the ages of 14 and 17, except in Suriname, where only a quarter of the inmates surveyed obtained it before 18 and the majority between the ages of 18 and 20. The data also show that two-thirds or more of the prison population owned a weapon by the age of 20 and that obtaining their first weapon after age 25 was very rare, varying from 15 percent in Suriname to 7 percent in Trinidad and Tobago. These results suggest that in most countries inmates begin to own firearms at a very young age.

**Table 14: Age First Owned a Firearm (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Up to 13 years	10	18	15	23	9	20
From 14 to 17	43	50	32	36	24	46
From 18 to 20	19	20	29	15	36	15
From 21 to 25	14	6	14	12	16	12
26 or more	14	6	10	14	15	7

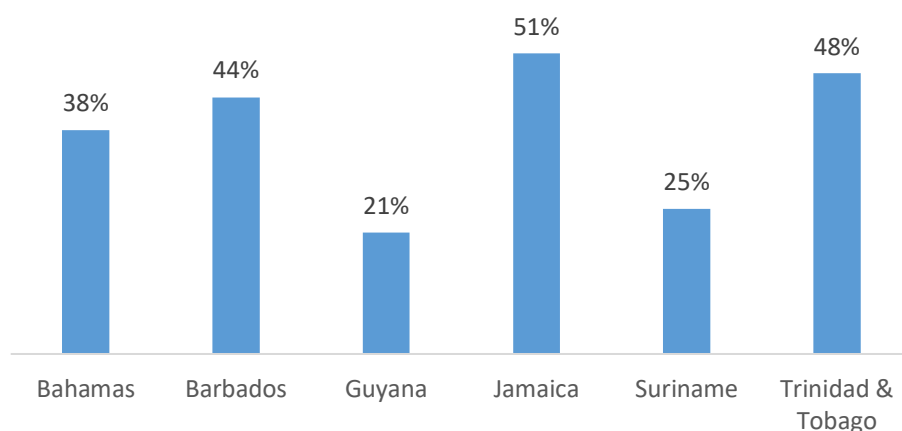
Most of those who had weapons had used them (Trinidad and Tobago, 87 percent; Jamaica, 82 percent; Barbados, 81 percent; and Suriname, 72 percent) (Figure 37), although this did not always mean that they had hurt or killed someone (according to their answers).



**Figure 37: Had Used a Firearm**

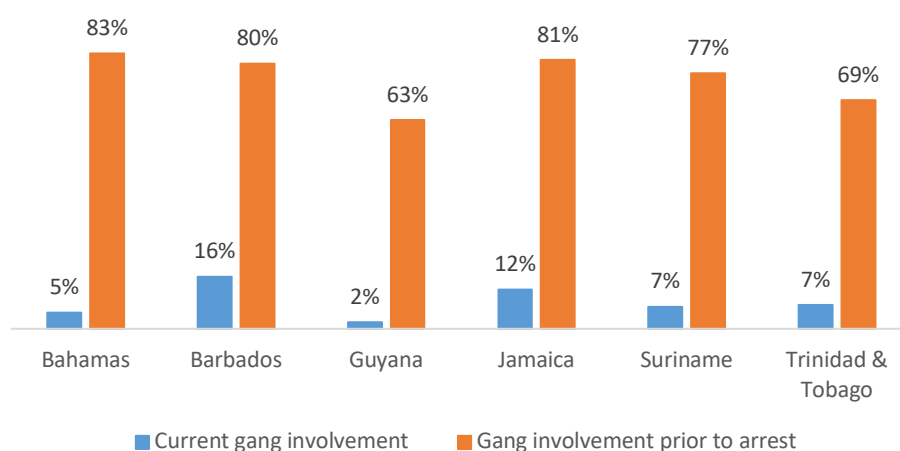
*Note:* No inquiry was made on this point in Guyana and the Bahamas.

When asked if they had ever killed or hurt anyone with a weapon they owned (Figure 38), 51 percent of the inmates in Jamaica and 48 percent of the inmates in Trinidad and Tobago said that they had compared to 26 percent in Suriname and 21 percent in Guyana.

**Figure 38: Injured or Killed Someone with a Firearm**

### Gang Involvement

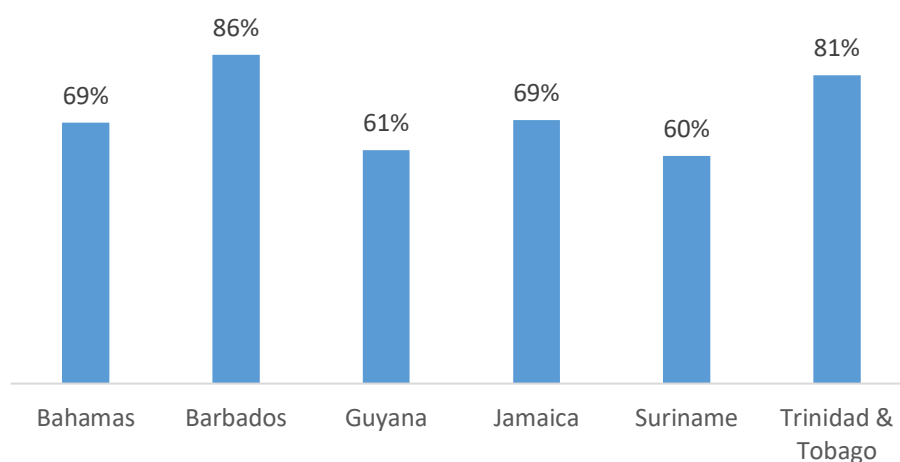
To examine inmate participation in gangs, respondents were asked about current gang membership while in prison and gang membership before their arrest (Figure 39). Current membership ranged from 2 percent in Guyana to 16 percent in Barbados. In contrast, gang membership prior to arrest among those who admitted to have been gang members was much higher, ranging from 63 percent in Guyana to 83 percent in The Bahamas.

**Figure 39: Gang Involvement**

The substantial differences between the percentage of inmates who said they belonged to a gang while in prison and those who said they belonged to a gang prior to their arrest is striking, both because of its magnitude (the smallest difference was 61 percent in Guyana) and because of its regional character. It is possible that the respondents were concerned that information about current membership in gangs could be used against them and may have adverse consequences for their court cases or treatment while in prison. On the other hand, the lower gang membership after incarceration may signal that prison authorities have been successful, to some extent, in reducing the incidence of gang membership among inmates. The very high percentage of inmates who belonged to gangs prior to incarceration (the lowest rate was 63 percent in Guyana) suggests that gang members may be disproportionately involved criminal offenses and that criminal gangs pose a serious challenge in all of the countries studied.

### Drug Use

At least 60 percent of the inmates in the countries surveyed had used illegal drugs within their lifetime (Figure 40), with the highest rates in Barbados (86 percent) and Trinidad and Tobago (81 percent) and the lowest rates being in Guyana (61 percent) and Suriname (60 percent).

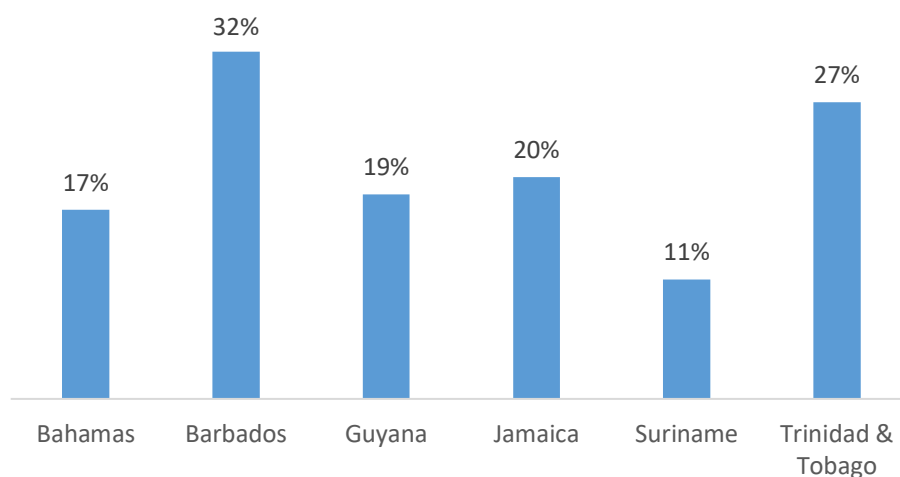
**Figure 40: Tried at Least One Drug**

The majority of inmates had tried only one type of drug (Table 15), particularly in Jamaica, where 96 percent of the respondents said they had tried only one type of drug in their lifetime compared to 63 percent in Barbados. The proportion of inmates who had used two or more drugs ranged from a low of 4 percent in Jamaica to a high of 38 percent in Barbados.

**Table 15: Number of Drugs Tried (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Only one	81	63	80	96	65	70
2	13	26	17	4	24	22
3 or more	6	12	3	0	11	8

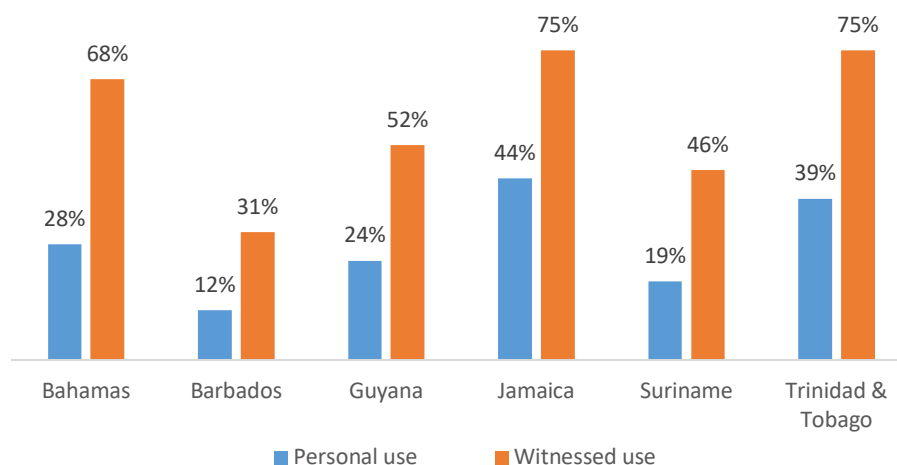
In Barbados, 32 percent of the inmates who had used drugs started at a very early age (before age 13) (Figure 41), followed by 27 percent in Trinidad and Tobago. The lowest percentage of inmates who had used drugs before the age of 13 was in Suriname (11 percent). The results suggest that drug use may be a risk factor in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. At a minimum the results show that illegal substances can be accessed in both countries at a very early age.

**Figure 41: Tried at Least One Drug at 12 Years or Younger**

### Alcohol and Drug Use in Prison

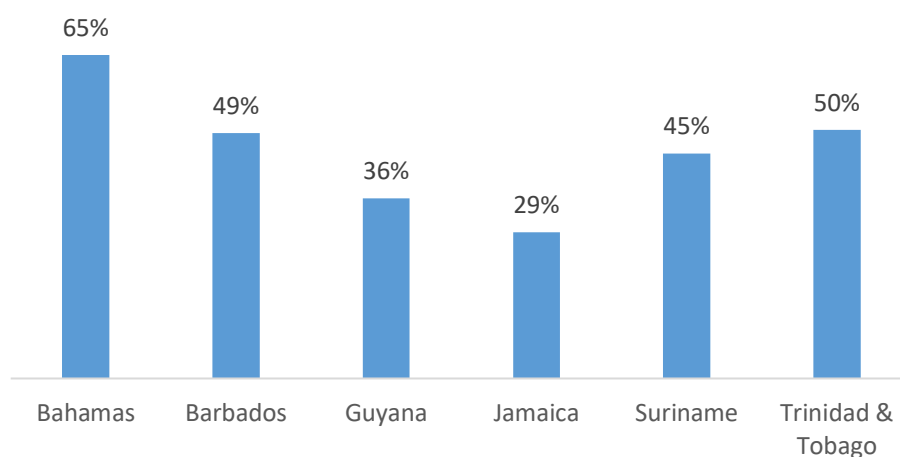
The highest personal use of drugs and/or alcohol in prison (Figure 42) occurred in Jamaica, where 44 percent of inmates admitted to using them, and the lowest level was in Barbados (12 percent). Inmates were also asked whether they had witnessed others using drugs and/or alcohol in prison (Figure 42). Not surprisingly, these percentages were much higher than when inmates referred to their own drug/alcohol use. The highest levels were observed in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago (75 percent), and the lowest in Barbados (31 percent). The results also show that the ranking of countries by witnessing use was similar to the ranking for personal use.

The higher rates reported for witnessing use could be the result of the bias of social desirability (Tourangeau and Yan, 2007; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2013). The strategy of asking questions referring to a third person has been demonstrated to be a useful practice to mitigate this bias when exploring sensitive issues. In this sense, the estimates of drug/alcohol use derived from asking about third parties could be considered a more valid estimate of the extent of use of drugs and alcohol in prison.

**Figure 42: Alcohol/Drug Use in Prison**

A large proportion of the prison population believed that it was easy to obtain drugs or alcohol while inside the prison (Figure 43), especially in The Bahamas, where 65 percent of the inmates held this belief, followed by 50 percent in Trinidad and Tobago 50 percent and 49 percent in Barbados. In contrast, Jamaica (29 percent) and Guyana (36 percent) had the lowest proportion of inmates who held similar opinions.

**Figure 43: Getting Drugs and Alcohol in Prison Is Easy or Very Easy**



The majority of inmates in the Caribbean believed that prison staff was responsible for bringing drugs and/or alcohol into the prison (Table 16), though a significant proportion of individuals said they did not know how such substances were smuggled into prison, which might reflect underreporting of drug smuggling, which can affect the findings. Broadly speaking, these indicators draw attention to the problem of drugs and alcohol within prisons and the likelihood that correctional agents are key actors in smuggling drugs into prisons.

**Table 16: Who Brings Drugs into Prison (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
DK / NA	32	30	54	38	50	17
Relatives or visitors	0	1	4	3	7	1
Prison staff	63	59	28	45	26	72
Police officers or guards	2	10	6	3	16	5
Military personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (specify)	4	1	9	11	2	5
Law enforcement officers	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Living Conditions in Caribbean Prisons

The previous sections provided insights into the lives of inmates by examining sociodemographic factors, childhood experiences, characteristics of the crimes committed, recidivism, gang involvement, and drug use. This report now shifts its focus to look at the living conditions within Caribbean prisons (this section)

and at violence and security in prison (next section) so that the reader is provided with insights into the experiences of inmates during incarceration. States must guarantee the dignity of inmates and individuals released from prison: therefore, knowing how individuals live while confined is essential to assessing the extent to which the state complies. Additionally, when prison conditions are in line with human rights, prisoners are more likely to have a favorable path toward social reintegration.

Before describing the living conditions experienced by inmates in the six countries studied, it is relevant to review the international legal framework regarding the rights of people deprived of liberty and their situation in terms of the ratification of international treaties and conventions. In the context of the Inter-American system, the human rights of inmates are protected by the American Convention on Human Rights, which entered into force in 1978 and to which four of the six countries adhere (Barbados, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, although the latter withdrew from the convention in 2012). For the states that have not agreed to this convention, the central instrument is the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, adopted in 1948. We note that another treaty that conforms to the Inter-American legal regime for the protection of human rights and that contains provisions directly applicable to the rights of people deprived of their liberty is the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture. While 18 countries have ratified it, Suriname is the only country of the six studied that is a signatory to that convention. All of the countries studied have ratified the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted in the context of the United Nations and entered into force in 1976. This is of particular significance for pretrial justice as the principles enshrined in this covenant indicate that people who are arrested or detained should be promptly brought before a judge and are entitled to a trial and, in general, they should not be detained while awaiting trial. However, only The Bahamas and Guyana signed and ratified the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entered into force in 1987.

There are instruments that specifically refer to the rights of prisoners, such as the Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, adopted in 1955 at the First United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Treatment of a Felon. The rules were reviewed in 2015, when they were renamed the Nelson Mandela Rules. Furthermore, there is a series of instruments approved by resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations in relation to the issue of prisons or the enforcement of the law: Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, approved in 1990; the Set of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Prison, adopted in 1988; the Principles of Medical Ethics Relevant to the Role of Health Personnel, particularly Physicians, in the Protection of Prisoners and Detainees against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment, adopted in 1982; the Code of Conduct for Officials Responsible for Enforcing the Law, adopted in 1979; and The Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Officials Responsible for Enforcing the Law, adopted in 1990. These codes and sets of principles have been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the six countries studied are members.

It is necessary to examine living conditions because they directly relate to the well-being of individuals who are deprived of liberty. It is important to reiterate that people are sent to prison for punishment, not as punishment. Unusually harsh and degrading conditions can have a negative impact on the physical and

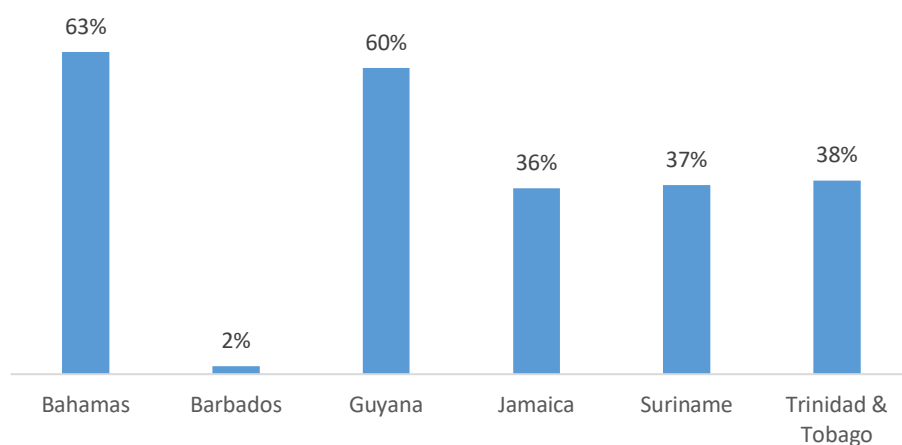
mental well-being of individuals, adding to what Sykes (1958) calls the pains of imprisonment. Unusually harsh conditions where inmates are deprived of many of the necessities to maintain a basic standard of physical well-being and dignity can be considered excessive and may point to areas where improvements should be made.

In this section we focus on overcrowding, access to supplies, availability and quality of water and food, healthcare, access to activities, visits, and violence. Barbados had the most favorable prison living conditions. Of all the indicators examined, Barbados showed poor performance in the quality of prison food. At the other extreme, Suriname had the least favorable living conditions, especially with regards to adequate housing and supplies for sleeping, dressing, and bathing. All countries showed some level of flaws related to the quality of the water and food, as well as medical and dental care.

### Overcrowding

Overcrowding was defined as housing inmates in spaces designed for fewer people than the number housed (Figure 44).<sup>17</sup> Overcrowding affects the majority of inmates in The Bahamas (63 percent) and Guyana (60 percent). This figure falls considerably in Trinidad and Tobago (38 percent), Suriname (36 percent), and Jamaica (36 percent) and is almost non-existent in Barbados (2 percent).

**Figure 44: Overcrowding**



### Access to Supplies

In Barbados, prisons provide almost all inmates with beds, mattresses, towels, and sheets, as well as clothing (Table 17). However, only half of the inmates in Barbados had shoes provided by the prison, instead receiving them from family, though still a much higher percentage than lower than 7 percent in the other countries.

<sup>17</sup> The spaces differed from prison to prison and many prisons had a mixture (e.g., cells, dorms, etc.). The word “spaces” was used as a broad term to capture this variability.

In the remaining countries the picture was very different. For all supplies—except beds and mattresses—families are key providers. Beds and mattresses are provided by the prison to almost all prisoners in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Barbados. In the other countries, prisons only supply beds and mattresses to about two-thirds of the prison population, with the deficiency mostly covered by families in Jamaica and Suriname. In The Bahamas, 29 percent of the respondents stated that nobody had provided them with a bed or a mattress, followed by Jamaica at 14 percent.

**Table 17: Supplies Provided by \_\_\_\_ (percent)**

		Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Sheet	Prison	8	90	5	12	0	17
	Family	79	0	79	70	86	73
	Other	10	8	10	4	9	7
	No one	4	2	6	15	4	4
Towel	Prison	—	95	4	4	0	9
	Family	—	1	82	72	87	81
	Other	—	1	8	3	9	5
	No one	—	3	7	21	4	5
Clothes	Prison	29	96	6	11	0	15
	Family	62	1	80	85	87	76
	Other	7	3	9	2	9	6
	No one	2	0	5	2	4	3
Shoes	Prison	6	48	6	4	0	7
	Family	82	36	80	88	86	83
	Other	8	15	8	3	9	4
	No one	4	1	6	4	5	6
Bed	Prison	69	99	91	63	65	94
	Family	1	0	2	20	21	1
	Other	1	1	1	3	5	1
	No one	29	1	6	14	9	4

Looking personal hygiene products (toilet paper, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste),<sup>18</sup> the results show that all of these products are distributed to almost the entire prison population of Guyana (85 percent) and Barbados (82 percent) (Table 18). The figure drops sharply for The Bahamas (66 percent), Jamaica (48 percent), and Trinidad and Tobago (41 percent). The supply of these products is less consistent in Jamaica and The Bahamas (between two and three of these products are given to inmates). In Trinidad and Tobago, on the other hand, partial delivery (26 percent) and total lack of product delivery (34 percent) was observed. In Suriname, none of the inmates received any of these personal hygiene products, which reflects a troubling situation of deprivation.

<sup>18</sup> Deodorant was excluded as this product was not studied in The Bahamas.



**Table 18: Prison Provides Toilet Paper, Soap, Toothpaste, and Toothbrush (percent)**

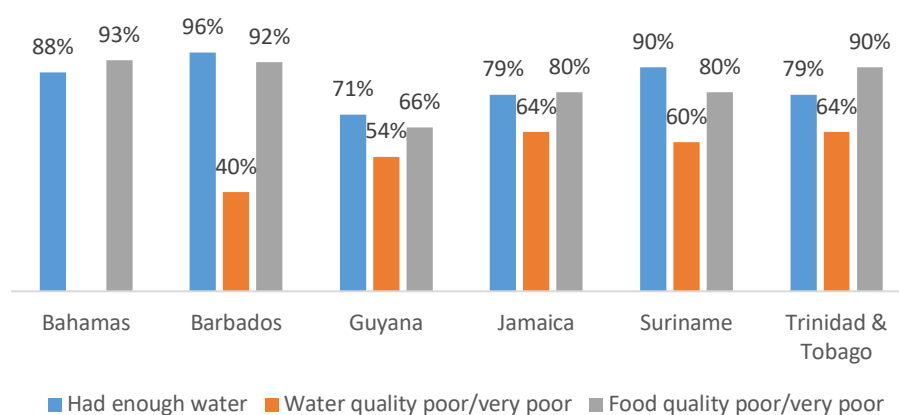
	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
No product	1	1	11	3	99	34
Only one	9	5	1	1	1	5
2	7	6	1	32	0	10
3	17	7	3	17	0	11
All of them	66	82	85	48	0	41

### Water and Food

A high percentage of inmates in Barbados (96 percent), Suriname (90 percent), and The Bahamas (88 percent) said they had access to enough water (Figure 45), dropping to a still high percentage of 79 percent in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica and 71 percent in Guyana.

Except in Barbados, more than half of the prison population believed that the quality of the water was poor (Jamaica, 64 percent; Trinidad and Tobago, 60 percent; and Suriname, 60 percent) (Figure 45). In Barbados, this percentage dropped to 40 percent.

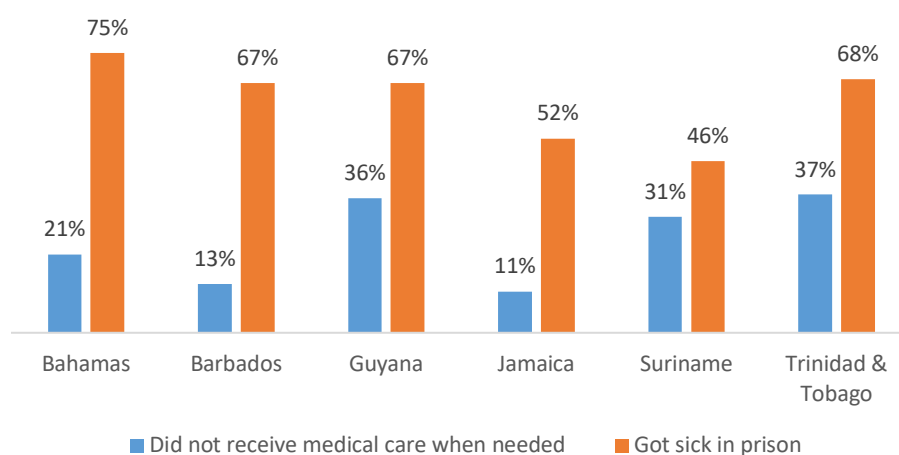
Almost all of the prisoners in all of the countries studied considered the food to be of poor or very poor quality (Figure 45), especially in The Bahamas (93 percent), Barbados (92 percent), and Trinidad and Tobago (90 percent). In Guyana, 66 percent of the respondents believed the food was poor or very poor.

**Figure 45: Water and Food**

*Note:* There was no information available about the inmates' perceptions of the quality of water in The Bahamas.

### Health

The most adverse scenario regarding healthcare occurred in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, where approximately 40 percent of the inmates did not receive medical attention when required; in Jamaica, 11 percent did not receive medical care when needed (Figure 46). Considering most of the respondents were sick at some point while in prison, access to medical care is important (Figure 46).

**Figure 46: Access to Medical Care**

The situation was even worse for dental health (Table 19), with 60 percent not receiving it when needed in Trinidad and Tobago, 53 percent in Suriname, 45 percent in Jamaica, and 36 percent in Barbados.

**Table 19: Access to Dental Care (percent)**

	Barbados	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Yes	42	37	17	21
No	36	45	53	60
Never need it	22	18	30	19

*Note:* Dental health was not investigated in Guyana or The Bahamas.

### Access to Activities

Considering, theoretically, the function of prisons is to support individual change and reintegration of individuals into society so that they do not reoffend, it is necessary to guarantee the mechanisms required for this process. For instance, it is essential that the conceptual and organizational frameworks and objectives that guide the mission of prison systems incorporate inmate rehabilitation and reintegration. Although this does not mean that such goals permeate daily practices or coexist with more punitive purposes, it can be seen as a first indicator of correctional systems recognizing the relevance of rehabilitative goals. For this reason, a quick review of the organizational missions of the correctional systems of the six countries studied was carried out to identify any rehabilitative purpose.

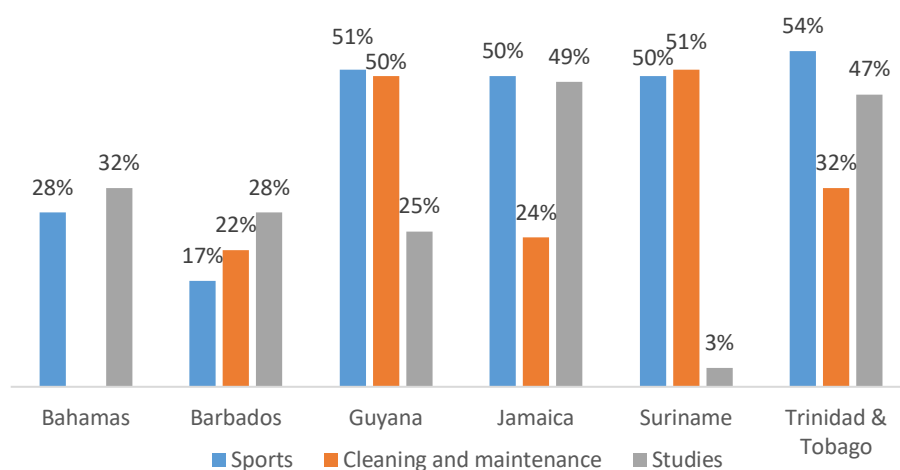
The organizational missions of the agencies in charge of the correctional centers of the six countries were identified through their institutional websites. Information was found for all countries except Suriname. Four countries mention rehabilitation as an objective of their prison system (Bahamas Prison Department, 2019; Barbados Prison Service, 2019; Jamaica Department of Correctional Services, 2019; T&T Prison Service, 2019). Guyana does not mention rehabilitation, but it does refer to re-educating inmates (Guyana

Ministry of Public Security, 2019<sup>19</sup>). In this report, rehabilitation is understood to be “a planned correctional intervention that targets for change internal and/or social criminogenic factors with the goal of reducing recidivism and, when possible, of improving other aspects of an offender’s life” (Cullen and Jonson, 2011). Many activities can be used to rehabilitate, including education, anger management, and drug rehabilitation.

Activities carried out in prisons can support reintegration processes and be an essential component of re-socializing inmates (Aguilar López et al., 2009). These activities have both an inward function, favoring a radical transformation of prison time, which is characterized by isolation and loneliness, and an outward function, preparing inmates for their release (Aguilar López et al., 2009). In this sense, the results of the survey are discouraging. Participation in sports activities, cleaning/maintenance chores, study and work programs was low in most countries, reaching in the best case, half of the prison population.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica, and Suriname, roughly half of the inmates were involved in sports activities, with the levels falling sharply in The Bahamas (28 percent) and Barbados (17 percent) (Figure 47). A similar trend was observed for cleaning and maintenance, with the highest rates in Guyana (50 percent) and Suriname (51 percent) and the lowest in Barbados (22 percent) and Jamaica (24 percent) (Figure 47). Almost half of the prison population in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were involved in educational activities compared to only 3 percent in Suriname (Figure 47).

**Figure 47: Participated in Activities in Prison**



*Note:* There was no information available for cleaning and maintenance in The Bahamas.

In all countries, the main reason prisoners did not study was lack of opportunity (e.g., there was no school, no classes, no vacancies, or no options for their level of instruction) (Table 20). This suggests that prison management needs to intervene to rectifying this matter since education within prisons is a responsibility.

<sup>19</sup>Information regarding missions for the various prisons were obtained from their official websites: The Bahamas, <https://www.bahamaslocal.com/showlisting/18258/The-Bahamas-Department-of-Corrections-HMP.html>; Barbados, <https://www.gov.bb/Departments/prison>; Jamaica, <https://www.dcs.gov.jm/>; Trinidad and Tobago, <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.tt/Divisions/Trinidad-and-Tobago-Prison-Service>; Guyana, <https://mops.gov.gy/>.

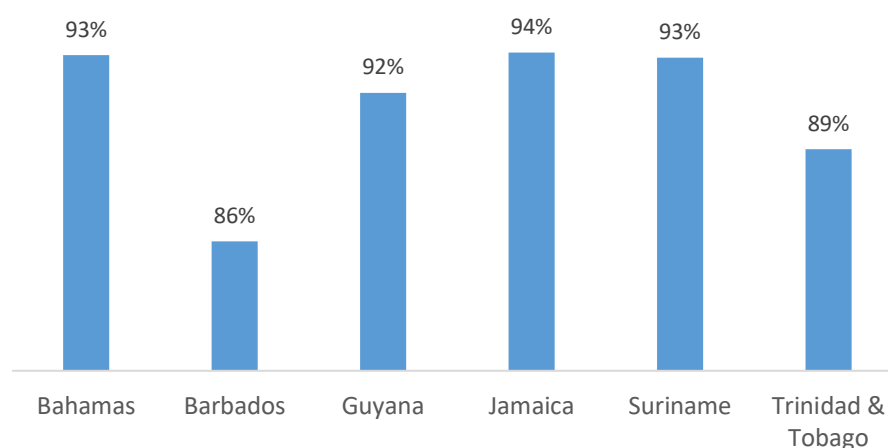
In Suriname, 93 percent of the respondents said that studying was not a choice; in the other countries no choice ranged from 76 percent of the respondents in Barbados to 47 percent in Guyana. The second most common reason for not studying was a lack of interest.

**Table 20: Reasons for Not Studying (percent)**

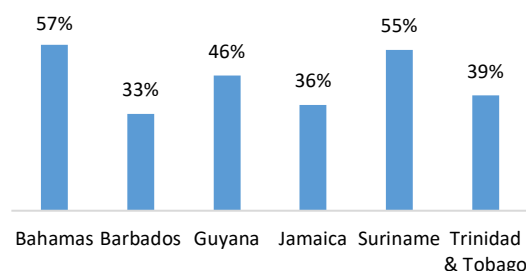
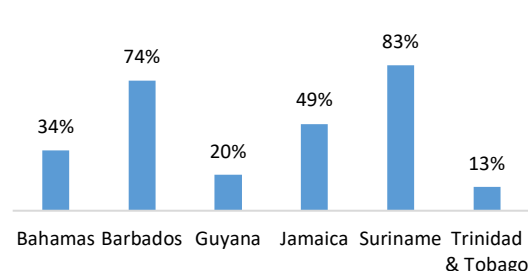
	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
It was not a choice	63	76	47	59	93	49
Teachers would not come	0	0	2	1	0	0
Teachers were pretty bad	0	0	1	0	0	0
I have no interest in studying	17	16	33	21	6	30
I dropped out, I didn't like it	2	0	3	2	0	3
Other	2	4	5	9	0	8
Personal problems (work, health, personal limitations, short time in prison)	11	4	7	7	1	9
Problems in the organization (they stopped carrying it, they did not report it)	5	0	2	1	0	1

Among the prisoners who did study, the perception of the education received in prison was very positive, with almost all of them considering it quite useful or very useful (Figure 48). This indicator suggests the need for interventions that promote and facilitate access to education programs in the correctional systems.

**Figure 48: Studies Will Be Very or Quite Useful**



Respondents were asked whether they worked while in prison (Figure 49). Overall, the numbers were quite low, ranging from 57 percent in The Bahamas and 55 percent in Suriname to 33 percent in Barbados and 36 percent in Jamaica. Work in prison was not always paid (Figure 50). The percentage of inmates who worked and were paid was highest in Suriname (83 percent), followed by Barbados (57 percent) and lowest in Trinidad and Tobago (13 percent), followed by Guyana (20 percent).

**Figure 49: Worked in Prison****Figure 50: Paid for Work in Prison**

It is important to highlight the relevance of paid work within prisons. Alós Moner, Miller, and Drake (2006) pointed out that receiving a salary is especially important because it allows inmates to avoid relying on their families to cover the costs of basic supplies and it may allow them to send money to their families. Furthermore, work equips inmates with skills, improves social relations, helps them spend their time in prison more constructively, and reduces opportunities for conflict situations. Alós Moner, Martín Artilles, Miguélez Lobo, et al. (2009) showed that inmates in prisons in Catalonia, Spain, valued their work in prison because it helped them to normalize everyday life in jail, while improving their expectations of future reintegration.

Even more critical in the Caribbean is that work allows inmates to save money while in prison. As noted earlier, there is very little support for inmates after they leave prison in the countries studied. In addition, inconsistent reintegration efforts while inmates are in prison hinder the probability of achieving successful reentry. Prisoners who are released face many hardships, including unemployment and the inability to provide for themselves. Releasing inmates who do not have the necessary skills to find and maintain employment, who do not have savings, and who do not have families to which they can return creates a situation of desperation where people may have to rely on any means necessary, including crime, to provide for themselves. Lack of employment and not being able to support themselves may be one of the most important factors that influences recidivism rates.

These findings suggest that there is urgent need to examine providing opportunities for inmates to work for pay while in prison and to offer support services once they are released. Work does not need to be restricted to within the walls of the prison; prisoners can be transported to other locations and appropriately supervised. Caribbean countries should consider the full range of employment opportunities that could be made available to prisoners, and measures should be taken to ensure that as many prisoners as possible have access to paid employment.

Note, we acknowledge that the international literature on the rehabilitative merits of work are mixed. Some studies of employment and work release programs found little evidence of effectiveness in reducing recidivism (Turner and Petersilia, 1996). More recent research, however, has found positive effects of work release programs on both employment and recidivism (Duwe, 2012, 2015). What may be needed is more comprehensive strategies that include a work component. While providing employment, such strategies should provide opportunities for behavioral change, such as substance abuse or mental health treatment (Apel, 2011; Taxman and Kras, 2016).

## Visits

In all countries studied, family contact was high, especially in Suriname, and family members were generally treated reasonably well. These results are positive given that strong family ties while incarcerated, including in-person or telephone visits, have been found to reduce and delay recidivism (Bales and Mears, 2008). Additionally, in the countries studied, inmates were quite dependent on their families during confinement and post-release because of the lack of supply of certain products and services from the prison system.

The level of contact with family members was analyzed in two parts: telephone conversations and personal visits.

Telephone contact (Table 21) was very frequent (at least once a week) in Barbados (69 percent) and The Bahamas (50 percent). At the other extreme, 65 percent of the respondents in Jamaica and 57 percent in Suriname had no telephone contact with their family. In Trinidad and Tobago, 44 percent of the inmates surveyed had phone contact with family at least once a week, but 29 percent had no contact at all. Similarly, in Guyana, 38 percent had frequent contact, but 27 percent of respondents had no contact.

**Table 21: Frequency of Telephone Conversations with Family (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Every day	30	44	9	13	13	27
Once or twice a week	20	25	29	8	17	17
Every 15 or 30 days	24	16	25	9	10	21
Once or twice a year	6	4	9	4	3	7
Never	22	11	27	65	57	29

With regard to personal visits (Table 22), in all countries, at least 50 percent of the respondents received visits from their family frequently (at least once a month), mostly once or twice a month, except in Suriname, where most inmates received weekly visits. The highest percentage of frequently visited inmates was in Barbados (73 percent) and the lowest was in Guyana (50 percent). The highest percentage of never visited inmates was in Guyana (30 percent) and the lowest in Jamaica (11 percent). Of note, in Guyana, though 32 percent of the inmates surveyed were visited once or twice a month, 30 percent were never visited.

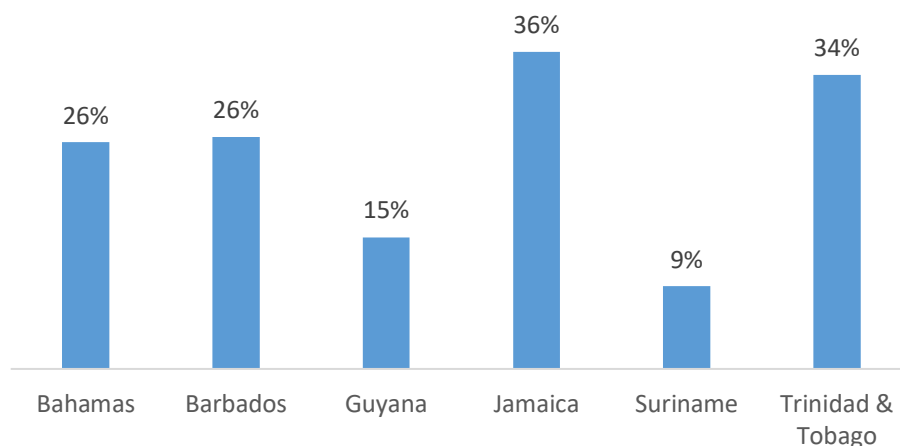
**Table 22: Frequency of Family Visits (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Once a week or more	3	23	18	30	51	11
Once or twice a month	61	50	32	41	26	50
Once or three times a year	13	12	20	19	8	22
Never	23	16	30	11	15	17

The majority of the inmates surveyed believed that their family members were treated well by prison staff. Despite this, a significant proportion of those imprisoned in Jamaica (36 percent) and Trinidad and Tobago (34 percent) indicated that their family members were treated badly or very badly by prison staff

(Figure 51). The rate falls to 26 percent in The Bahamas and Barbados and 15 percent in Guyana, with the lowest rate in Suriname (9 percent).

**Figure 51: Relatives Treated Badly or Very Badly by Prison Staff when Visiting Inmates**

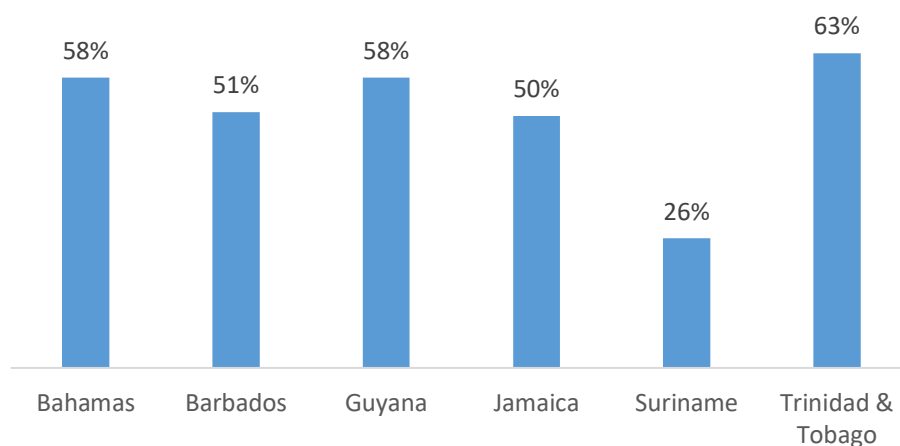


### Violence

The indicators that were used to assess victimization were misconduct (theft of belongings) and violence (beatings and sexual assaults) in prison.

At least half of the inmates surveyed said they had had belongings stolen (Figure 52), except in Suriname, where the number was 26 percent. The percentage was highest in Trinidad and Tobago (63 percent), followed by The Bahamas and Guyana (both at 58 percent).

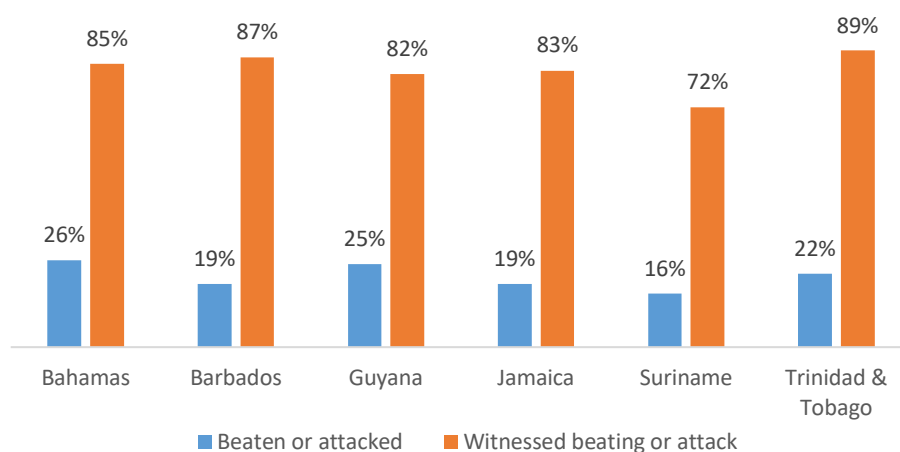
**Figure 52: Had Personal Belongings Stolen in Prison**



Violence was assessed both on personal experience and on seeing others experience beatings, physical attacks, or sexual attacks in the previous six months.

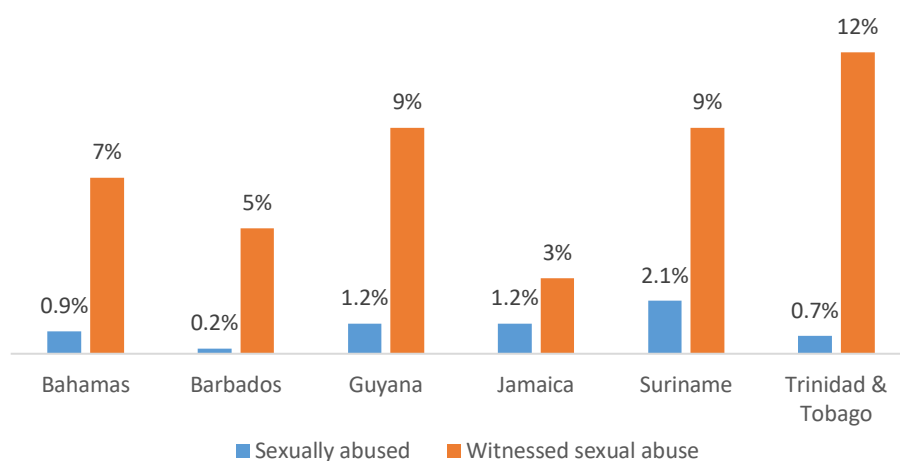
The highest rates of personal attacks occurred in The Bahamas (26 percent), Guyana (25 percent), and Trinidad and Tobago (22 percent), and the lowest rate in Suriname (16 percent) (Figure 53). The rates for witnessing physical violence ranged from a high of 89 percent in Trinidad and Tobago to a low of 72 percent in Suriname (Figure 53).

**Figure 53: Physical Violence in Previous 6 Months**



The rates of sexual abuse were very low in all countries (Figure 54), with the highest personal experience occurring in Suriname (2.1 percent) and the lowest in Barbados (0.2 percent). Typically, personal experiences of sexual abuse tend to be under-reported, thus the question about witnessing sexual abuse may provide a more accurate estimate its prevalence in Caribbean prisons. The highest rate of witnessing sexual abuse was in Trinidad and Tobago (12 percent), followed by Suriname and Guyana (both 9 percent), with the lowest rate in Jamaica (3 percent).

**Figure 54: Sexual Violence in Previous 6 Months**





## Due Process

As a result of their historical and colonial roots, many Commonwealth Caribbean countries share legal traditions, which is particularly evident in five of the countries studied, which are English-speaking and mostly former British colonies. Caribbean nations have continued to model their legal systems after former colonial nations with similar traditions, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. Thus, to a large extent, the fundamentals and operations of the criminal justice systems reflect the legacy of British common law (UNDP, 2012). The exception is Suriname, a former Dutch colony whose legal system is based on the tradition of Dutch civil law (UNDP, 2012).

The largest percentage of inmates surveyed were already sentenced in all countries except in Barbados, where 44 percent of the respondents were still awaiting trial (Table 23). In The Bahamas, 95 percent of inmates were already sentenced, followed by 75 percent in Jamaica and 60 percent in Guyana. Among those not yet sentenced, for some their trial was in progress but others were still awaiting trial. Of the respondents, 38 percent in Suriname and 23 percent in Guyana were in the midst of their trial. In contrast, 35 percent of inmates in Trinidad and Tobago and 12 percent in Jamaica were waiting for their trial to begin. Note that this means a large percentage of the inmates surveyed had been deprived of their liberty without having been convicted, particularly in Barbados (55 percent), Trinidad and Tobago (51 percent) and Suriname (46 percent).

**Table 23: Stage in Criminal Proceedings (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
The trial has not begun	0	44	15	12	8	35
Going through trial, no sentence yet	0	11	23	8	38	16
You have been sentenced	95	38	60	75	51	47
Other	5	7	3	5	3	1

## Arrest and Process Conditions

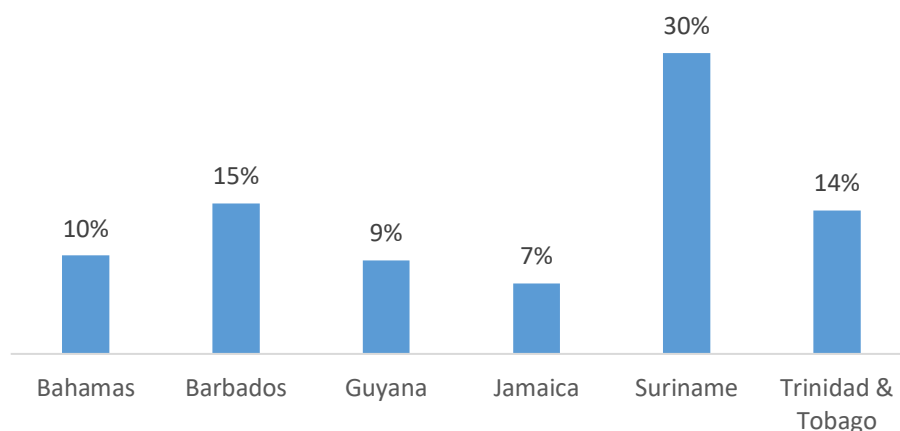
To assess arrest procedures, the survey asked about the time elapsed between the offense and arrest, whether police presented an arrest warrant, if inmates were told they had a right to a lawyer, if they experienced physical force at the police station, and if the magistrate and/or their lawyer was present during preliminary statements.

The largest percentage of respondents was arrested within a day of committing their crime (Table 24), except in Barbados and Jamaica, with the highest proportions being in Suriname (48 percent) and Guyana (46 percent) and the lowest in Barbados (23 percent). Further, arrests took place within a week of the crime more than half of the time, except in Jamaica (48 percent), with the highest percentages in Guyana (72 percent) and Suriname (65 percent). The percentages of inmates arrested more than a month after their crime was also quite high, ranging from 37 percent in Jamaica to 16 percent in Guyana.

**Table 24: Time between Offense and Arrest (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Less than 1 day	34	23	46	30	48	34
Between 1 day and a week	22	31	26	18	17	21
Between one week and 1 month	15	19	12	15	16	13
More than 1 month	30	27	16	37	19	32

The percentage of arrests where the police showed written warrants (Figure 55) was very low in most countries, with the highest rate in Suriname (30 percent), declining to 15 percent in Barbados and 14 percent in Trinidad and Tobago and 10 percent or less in the other three countries.

**Figure 55: Police Exhibited Warrant in Writing during Arrest**

The results were more favorable regarding being informed about their right to a lawyer. Before presenting the results, it is important to briefly describe what is established by the legal frameworks regarding the right to legal representation to explore whether these frameworks seek to guarantee free access to a lawyer's service for all citizens and if this takes place in reality.

The constitutions of the six countries indicate that any person who is arrested or detained has the right to legal representation. While the constitutions in The Bahamas, Barbados, and Guyana explicitly state that such services must be paid for by individuals, in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname this is not explicitly stated (although Suriname's constitution indicates that laws should regulate access to legal representation by those with economic difficulties).

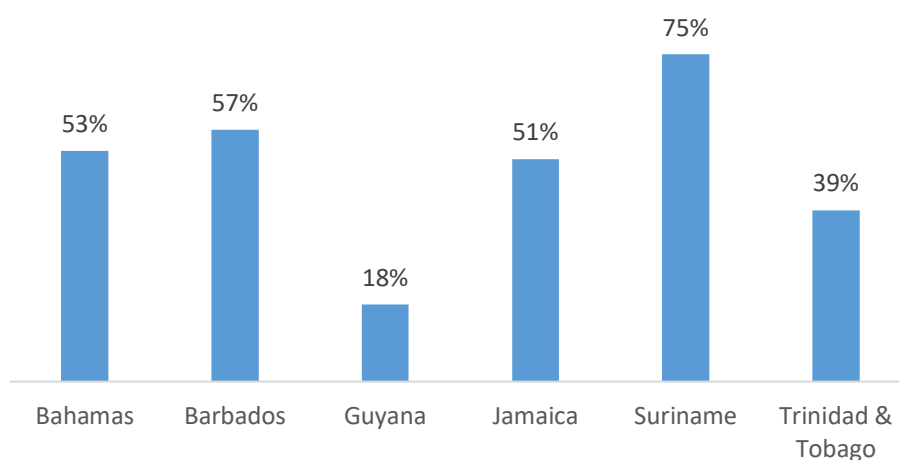
Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica stand out for having accepted the principle that the state must guarantee access to legal representation; consequently, they have established legal assistance services financed with public funds (O'Brien and Epp, 2005). However, in Barbados, a lawyer is only guaranteed to be assigned to a defendant by the state legal assistance for a very limited range of offenses (Forte, 2010). In Trinidad and Tobago, legal assistance is not guaranteed for any category of crime and is only granted when the court considers it in the "interest of justice" that the accused be legally represented by

a lawyer, giving rise to a wide margin of discretion. In Jamaica, legal advice is recognized as mandatory for most, although not all, crimes. For example, some of the excluded crimes are those related to the *Money Laundering Act* and the *Dangerous Drugs Act* (O'Brien, 2002).

In The Bahamas, Guyana, and Suriname, people rely heavily on the assistance offered by legal counseling clinics established by voluntary civil organizations (O'Brien and Epp, 2005). Although these clinics usually receive a small amount of funding from government, their financing depends mainly on contributions made by clients. To be economically sustainable, these clinics are forced to concentrate on civil matters that attract clientele capable of paying certain fees, implying that they can only offer limited assistance in criminal matters and very exceptionally reach the trial stage. Although these countries do not have empirical data related to this issue, reports from organizations such as Amnesty International have warned that large numbers of defendants in these countries are prosecuted for serious criminal offenses without legal representation (Amnesty International, 1998).

The survey results show a broad range for whether inmates were informed of their right to counsel (Figure 56). In Suriname, 75 percent of the respondents were informed of this right; however, in Guyana, only 18 percent were. So, although the constitutions of the countries studied recognize the right of people to legal representation, in practice, their guarantee is far from a reality for many of the individuals who cannot afford the services of a lawyer.

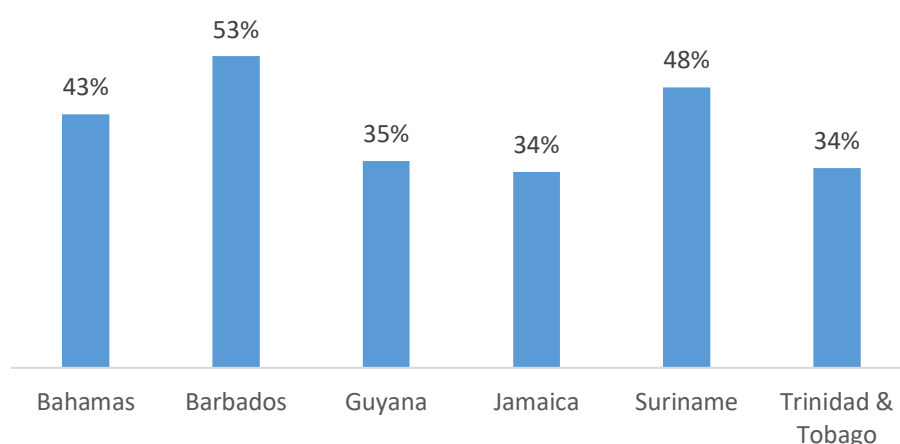
**Figure 56: Inmate Informed of Right to Counsel**



A worrying situation was identified with regards to the use of physical force while individuals were still at the police station (Figure 57). Such abuse was especially pronounced in Barbados (53 percent), Suriname (48 percent), and The Bahamas (43 percent), with the remaining countries at approximately one-third. The use of unwarranted physical force by law enforcement agencies reduces their legitimacy. Previous research has shown that there is a lot room for improvement in the perception of the police in Caribbean countries. For example, the UNDP (2012) collected data from five of the six countries studied (not The Bahamas) and found that citizens in Jamaica and Suriname had some of the lowest levels of confidence in the police regarding beliefs about the police treating citizens with courtesy, equality, fairness and respect.

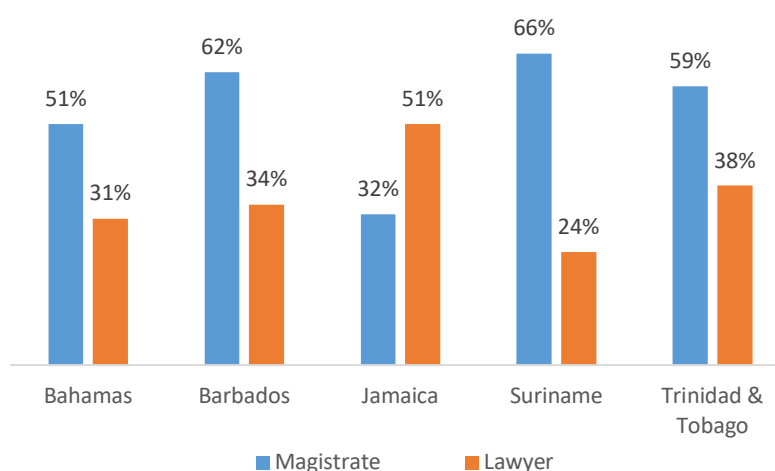
The UNDP (2012) also found that Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago had the lowest proportion of residents who felt that the police respected the rights of citizens. The use of physical force while arrestees are in police custody may serve to exacerbate negative perceptions of the police and could have widespread negative effects when the use of such force is publicized by the media. Where police brutality results in deaths, the effects can be irreparable. While the police must effectively secure arrestees, the results from this study suggest that there is room for improvement in the way that the police treat people in their custody. It is important to remember that people are presumed innocent under the law until convicted.

**Figure 57: Hit or Subjected to Physical Force at Police Station**



A magistrate was present at inmates' preliminary statements more frequently than their lawyers (Figure 58). A magistrate was present most commonly in Suriname (66 percent) and Barbados (62 percent) and least often in Jamaica (32 percent). The inmate's lawyer was present at 51 percent of statements in Jamaica but only 24 percent in Suriname. Note that only in Jamaica was the lawyer present more often than the magistrate.

**Figure 58: Magistrate or Lawyer Present During Preliminary Statement**



*Note:* Due to errors in the application of this questionnaire item, the information is not presented for Guyana.

### Quality of Defense

While all countries recognize the constitutional right to legal counsel, its provision to those charged with criminal offenses is not always straightforward, economically feasible, timely, or of quality. The quality of legal representation varies in all of the countries studied because of the different mechanisms used to provide such services. In particular, results from the survey suggest that low quality legal counsel is widespread because inmates often had infrequent or almost no contact with their lawyer or had no legal representation at all. The role of the defense attorney, particularly at the preliminary hearing, is of significant value. Without legal counsel, defendants' right to freedom is jeopardized, and judicial officers have ample discretion to deny bail or set excessive bail amounts without objection, and impose disproportional sentences. Legal scholarship suggests that when attorneys are provided before a defendant's first appearance, they can prevent clients from making incriminating statements (Ho, 2013). Lawyers can also help defendants better understand and navigate the court process and the implications of choices (Chin and Holmes, 2002; Ellmann, Gunning, Shalleck, et al., 2004). Also, lawyers can improve clients' capacity to assist in their own defense (Kalhous and Meringolo, 2012) and advocate for release on recognizance or manageable bail (Colbert, Paternoster, and Bushway, 2002). The evidence assessing the effectiveness of private versus public attorneys on case-processing outcomes during pretrial detention, conviction, and sentencing has been mixed, with no clear conclusion regarding favorable case outcomes for defendants (Cohen, 2014; Hanson, Ostrom, Hewitt, et al., 1992; Hartley, Miller, and Spohn, 2010; Hoffman, Rubin, and Shepherd, 2005; Nardulli, Eisenstein, and Flemming, 1988; Williams, 2002, 2013).

Regarding the amount of contact inmates had with their lawyers (Table 25), the worst situation was observed in Guyana where 38 percent had no legal representation and 35 percent almost never saw their attorney. In Barbados, 65 percent of the respondents either did not have a lawyer or almost never saw their lawyer, and in Suriname, 64 percent. In Jamaica, while very few inmates (4 percent) did not have a lawyer, a significant proportion (47 percent) almost never saw their lawyer. On the other hand, some inmates saw their lawyer at least once a month, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago, where 75 percent of the respondents saw their counsel this amount. Of note, in The Bahamas, 24 percent of the inmates saw their lawyer once a week or more.

**Table 25: Frequency of Contact with the Lawyer (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Once a week or more	24	8	7	13	10	6
Every 15 day / once a month	19	25	20	36	26	69
Almost never	40	39	35	47	44	29
Other	0	3	1	1	1	0
Did not have a lawyer	17	26	38	4	20	27

An inmate's defense can also be affected by changing lawyers several times during the process. In all countries studied, the largest proportion of inmates had only one lawyer—in principle, the best situation—rang-

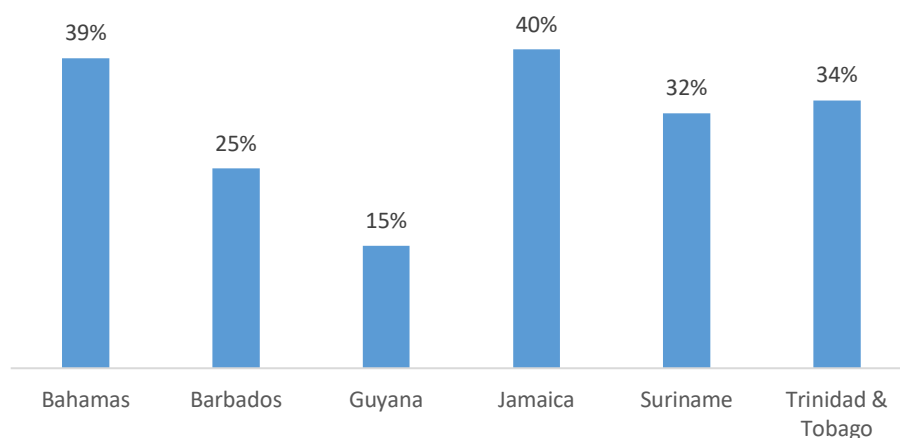
ing from 45 percent in Trinidad and Tobago to 77 percent in Suriname (Table 26). The country with the highest proportion of inmates who had three or more lawyers was Trinidad and Tobago (28 percent). Barbados (34 percent) and Jamaica (33 percent) had a notable proportion of inmates who had two lawyers.

**Table 26: Number of Lawyers since Arrest (percent)**

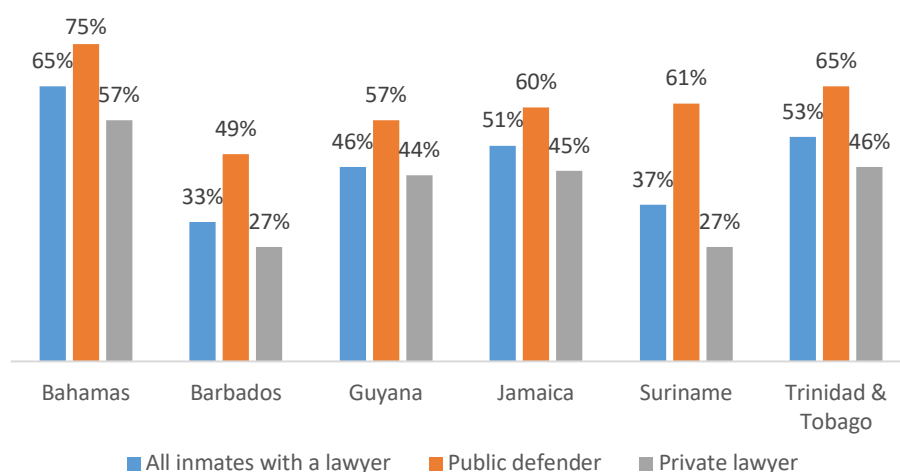
	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
1 lawyer	70	51	75	52	77	45
2 lawyers	21	34	18	33	19	27
3 or more lawyers	9	15	7	15	4	28

In all countries, the majority of inmates who had legal representation hired a private attorney. Despite this, the proportion of those who had public defenders is important and varied across countries (Figure 59). The highest level of public representation was observed in Jamaica (40 percent) and The Bahamas (39 percent) and the lowest in Guyana (15 percent).

**Figure 58: Main Lawyer a Public Defender**

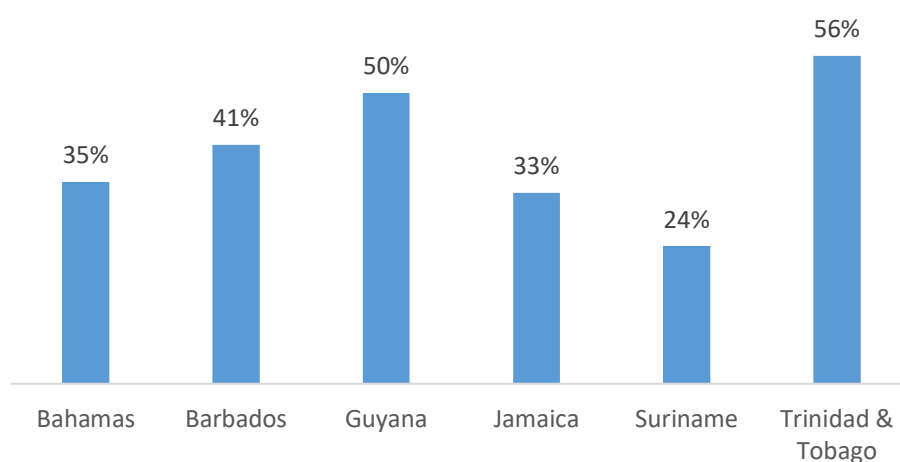


Respondents were asked how well they thought their lawyer defended them (Figure 60). Considering all inmates with lawyers, at 65 percent, The Bahamas had the highest percentage who felt they were defended little or very little (i.e., poorly), followed by Trinidad and Tobago (53 percent) and Jamaica (51 percent). In the other three countries, though this view was not held by the majority of inmates, it was still pronounced (between 46 percent in Guyana and 33 percent in Barbados). When the quality of legal representation is disaggregated by public versus private attorneys, the results show that inmates were much less satisfied with the performance of public attorneys in all countries, especially in Suriname.

**Figure 59: Lawyer Defended Inmate Little or Very Little**

### Corruption

One question used to assess corruption was whether inmates believed that they would have been released during their arrest if they had paid law enforcement agents (Figure 61). In Trinidad and Tobago, 56 percent of the respondents believed this to be true, followed by Guyana at 50 percent, which indicates a high level of perception of corruption in these countries. This belief decreased to 40 percent in Barbados and about a third in The Bahamas and Jamaica, with the perception of corruption lowest in Suriname (24 percent).

**Figure 60: Law Enforcement Agents Making Arrest Would Have Released Inmate if Paid**

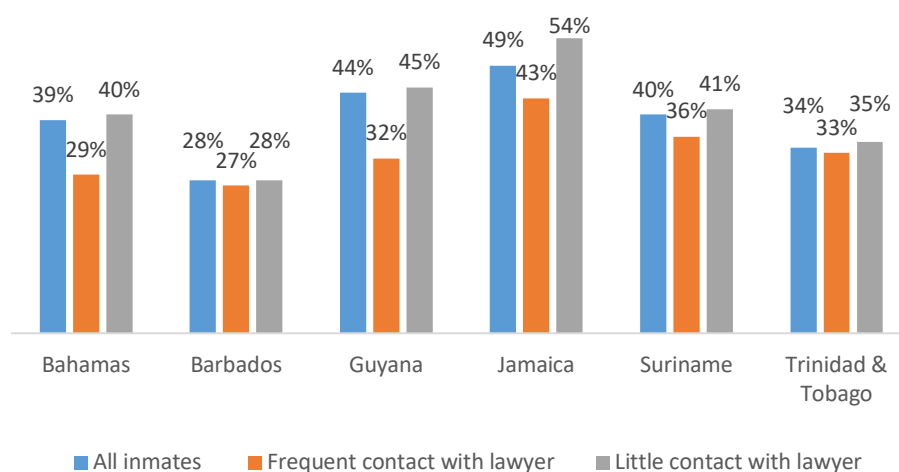
### Judicial Process

To assess the effectiveness of the judicial process, inmates were asked how much they understood about the process and their trial proceedings, how often they communicated with the judge and whether they felt heard, and how many lawyers they had had.

While the majority of those sentenced or in the process of being sentenced understood what was happening during their trial, a notable proportion still felt excluded because of their lack of understanding of trial processes. Knowledge of what is happening during the trial process is a key right of people who are accused of committing a crime (Binder, 1993). Every person who enters the criminal justice system has the right not only to access information regarding their rights but also to an accurate understanding of criminal proceedings. Without this knowledge, defendants are less capable of adequately defending themselves.

A significant proportion of the Caribbean prison population showed little understanding of what was happening during their trial, ranging from 49 percent in Jamaica to 28 percent in Barbados (Figure 62). Further, understanding was lower among those who had infrequent contact with their lawyer or had no legal representation, especially in Guyana, The Bahamas, and Jamaica (Figure 62). This lack of understanding suggests a possible intervention: strengthen legal counsel by promoting access of all detained individuals to legal representation from first appearance through all legal proceedings, encouraging and promoting a more frequent and fluid dialog between inmates and lawyers.

**Figure 61: Understood Little or Very Little of What Was Happening in Hearings and Court**



Another factor that may be of relevance, especially in Guyana and Suriname, relates to the use of the official language in court proceedings. Guyana and Suriname are characterized by ethnic diversity and have remote interior regions with populations that do not use the country's official language. Defendants who have difficulty understanding the language used in the courts will have difficulty understanding their court proceedings.

As previously noted, in The Bahamas, Guyana, and Suriname people rely heavily on the assistance offered by legal counseling clinics established by civil organizations (O'Brien, 2002); however, such services fail to cover the entire population that requires assistance. Likewise, in countries like Barbados, state legal assistance is only guaranteed for some crimes, suggesting some level of vulnerability for the prison population since a lack of legal defense can also be related to a lower understanding of the judicial process, with



the consequent violation of rights that this entails. Therefore, the authorities should ensure that all individuals have access to legal representation, which would favor not only greater understanding of the legal process but also the protection of the rights of incarcerated individuals.

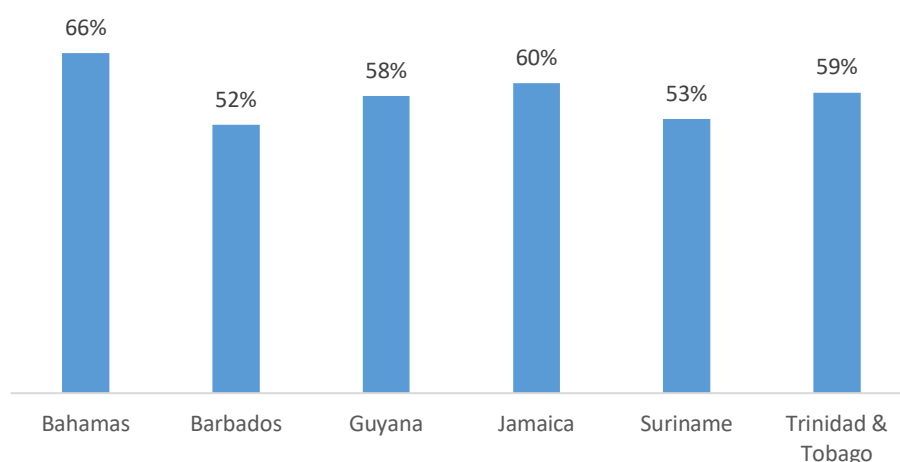
In all countries except Jamaica, the largest proportion of those sentenced or on trial had opportunities to speak directly with the judge or magistrate, although not frequently (Table 27). In Jamaica, half of the inmates never spoke with the judge, while 39 percent spoke to the judge one or two times.

**Table 27: Times Spoke Directly to Judge or Magistrate (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Never spoke	28	17	30	50	11	28
1–2 times	48	47	53	39	43	39
3–5 times	16	19	13	8	33	20
More than 5 times	8	17	5	4	13	13

Among those who spoke at least once with the judge, more than half felt that they were heard little or very little (Figure 62). The range by country was narrow, with the highest percentage saying they did not feel the judge listened in The Bahamas (66 percent) and the lowest in Barbados (52 percent).

**Figure 62: Magistrate Listened Little or Very Little**



The time elapsed between arrest and sentencing varied widely among countries (Table 28). In Trinidad and Tobago, just over half of those sentenced (which is about half of those incarcerated) were sentenced very quickly—within three months of their arrest—while 29 percent were sentenced more than 18 months after being arrested. Similarly, in Guyana, 45 percent of convicted inmates received their sentence within three months, while 27 percent waited more than 18 months. In Suriname, 50 percent were sentenced fairly quickly—within eight months of their arrest—but only 14 percent were sentenced more than 18 months after their arrest.

In Jamaica, Barbados, and The Bahamas, the largest percentage of convicts (at least 40 percent) waited more than 18 months from arrest to sentencing, but in Barbados and The Bahamas, the next largest percentage were sentenced within three months (35 percent and 27 percent, respectively). We note that there are no official records available to validate these comparisons.

**Table 28: Time between Arrest and Sentencing (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
3 months or less	27	35	45	13	25	52
4–8 months	11	9	16	17	25	11
9–12 months	13	8	9	13	23	4
13–18 months	8	3	4	8	13	4
More than 18 months	40	45	27	49	14	29

### Impact of Incarceration on Families

The families of some inmates experienced economic problems as a result of their incarceration (especially incurring debts) (Table 29). Incarceration generated economic problems for almost half of those incarcerated in Trinidad and Tobago (43 percent) and Jamaica (45 percent), while slightly less in Barbados (39 percent) and Suriname (38 percent) had similar problems. Suriname was the only country where the majority of inmates (50 percent) declared that their families were not affected by their imprisonment. Only in Barbados was there a significant gender difference, with 63 percent of the female inmates and 41 percent of the males reporting no additional hardship due to incarceration.

**Table 29: Impact of Detention on Inmates' Family (percent)**

	Barbados	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
– Spouse had to find another job	2	6	9	5
– Children had to give up school	1	3	1	1
– Children had to work	2	0	1	0
– The family had to move out of the house	2	4	1	4
– The family fell into debt	32	32	26	33
It had no impact	43	30	50	43
Other	18	25	12	14

*Note:* This question was not included in The Bahamas or Guyana.

### Future Projections and Reentry

Before analyzing the results related to inmates' plans and projections for after their release from prison, it is relevant to mention this population's average sentence length because, according to the literature, people who have served longer prison sentences are more likely to reoffend since, among other reasons, the process of adaptation to life in society becomes more difficult (Bonta and Gendreau, 1990; Adams,

1992; Gendreau and Goggin, 1994; Richards et al., 2011; Haney, 2003). The median sentence received by inmates for the six countries studied combined was 4.3 years.<sup>20</sup>

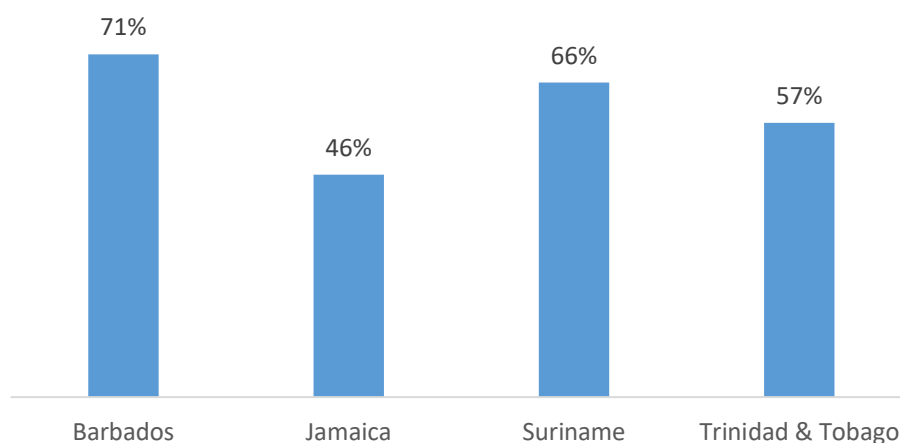
The inmates were asked who they planned to live with when they were released (Table 30). In all countries studied, most of the inmates planned to live with family, which is consistent with previous findings that family members are the most important source of financial resources, housing and emotional support for prisoners once they are released (La Vigne, Shollenberger, and Debus, 2009; La Vigne, Visser, and Castro, 2004; Visser and Courtney, 2007). Planning to live with family ranged from 66 percent in The Bahamas and Guyana to 48 percent in Suriname. Other common plans were to live with their partner (ranging from 21 percent in Guyana to 7 percent in The Bahamas) or to live alone (ranging from 22 percent in Trinidad and Tobago to 8 percent in Jamaica). In Barbados and Suriname, inmates were just as likely to choose to live with their partner or alone (Barbados, 12 percent with a partner and 11 percent alone; Suriname 19 percent for both). It is interesting to note here, as we discuss later in the report (see Figure 76), females were more likely than males to have a partner currently imprisoned, which implies there are fewer options for females to move in with a partner.

**Table 30: Will Go to Live with... (percent)**

	<b>Bahamas</b>	<b>Barbados</b>	<b>Guyana</b>	<b>Jamaica</b>	<b>Suriname</b>	<b>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</b>
Partner	7	12	21	18	19	11
Family home	66	63	66	59	48	58
Friends	1	3	1	2	2	3
Other	6	5	2	3	8	5
Don't know yet	9	6	0	11	5	1
Alone	11	11	10	8	19	22

The prison populations of the countries studied responded differently when asked about where they would live on release (Figure 64). The majority of inmates planned to return to the same neighborhood where they lived before being arrested in Barbados (71 percent), Suriname (66 percent), and Trinidad and Tobago (57 percent). In contrast, in Jamaica, the majority (54 percent) did not plan to go back to the same place they lived before.

<sup>20</sup> For this indicator the median was used instead of the mean because some extraordinarily long sentences raised the average, making the mean less representative of the majority of the population studied. The medians for each country were: Jamaica, 8 years; Trinidad and Tobago, 3 years; Guyana, 3 years; The Bahamas, 5 years; Barbados, 3 years; and Suriname, 4 years.

**Figure 63: Plan to Live in Same Neighborhood as Before the Arrest**

*Note:* This question was not included in The Bahamas and Guyana.

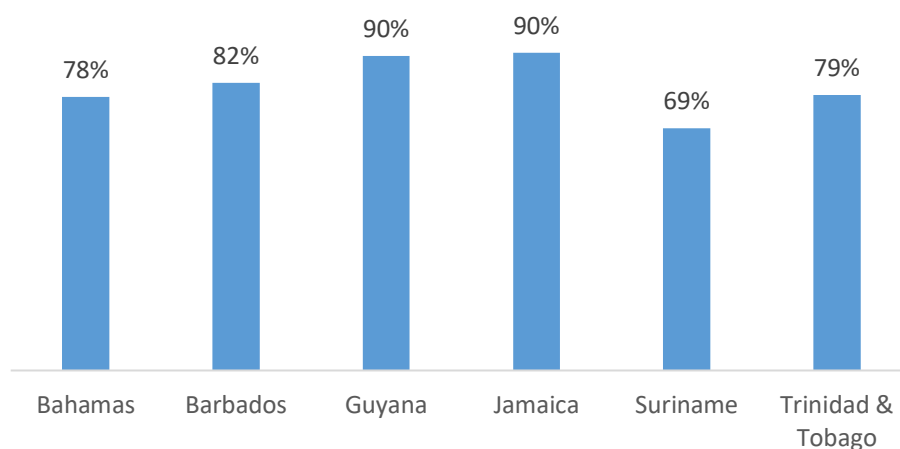
Research on the reentry process indicates that the characteristics of the neighborhoods to which inmates return or to which people move once they are released from prison play a key role in determining whether they reoffend (Bouffard, MacKenzie, and Hickman, 2000; Hipp, Petersilia, and Turner, 2010; Kubrin and Stewart, 2006). Studies such as the one conducted by Kubrin and Stewart (2006) found higher levels of recidivism among people who, after being released from prison, returned to neighborhoods with lower economic resources and availability of social services, regardless of the individual characteristics of the individuals. Such research underscores the importance of the context to which those who leave the prison are integrated.

There is also extensive evidence showing that recently released individuals who access social services related to job search, housing, drug treatment, and education better reintegrate into their community, reducing recidivism (Anglin, Prendergast, Farabee, et al., 2002; Allard and Danziger, 2003; Brameld and Holman, 2006; Gregory, Malka, Kostis, et al., 2000; Visser and Courtney, 2007; Weiss and Greenlick, 2007; Zhang, Roberts, and Callnan, 2006). A key study in this area was carried out by Hipp et al. (2010) who found that the geographical proximity of social services (e.g., employment, education, and accommodation) and the degree to which such services are used affect the recidivism levels of people released from prisons. These findings indicate the importance of the neighborhood environment and access to services in the reintegration of those who leave prison. This implies that people who come from neighborhoods characterized by poor access to social services face significant challenges when they leave correctional centers.

As shown in Figure 64, in all countries where this question was asked, a very significant proportion of the inmates planned to return to the same neighborhood where they resided before their incarceration. Since the inmates in these countries usually come from socioeconomically vulnerable sectors of the population, it is reasonable to assume that they had lived in neighborhoods with limited access to the aforementioned services (UNDP, 2012). As a result, inmates will face the challenges of adapting to a life of freedom in environments with limited access to important resources that can assist in the reintegration process.

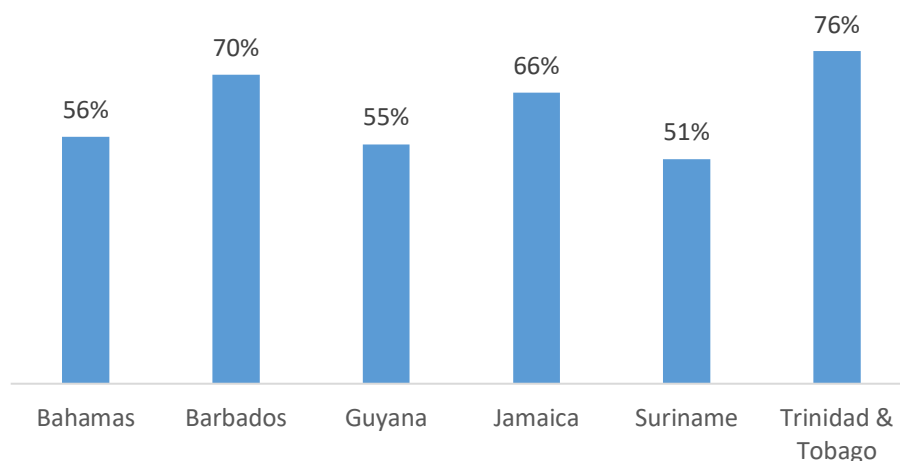
It is encouraging to note that inmates expressed optimistic views regarding their situation after release (Figure 65). This is particularly true in Guyana and Jamaica, where 90 percent of inmates believed that their situation would be better after their release compared to their reality before they were arrested. However, the numbers were still high in all of the other countries as well, with roughly 80 percent feeling this way in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and The Bahamas, and 69 percent in Suriname.

**Figure 64: Life Will Go Better after Release (Compared to before Arrest)**



While many inmates plan to return to the same neighborhood where they lived before they were arrested, they intend to relate to new people and change their social environment (Figure 66). This trend was especially pronounced in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados where a substantial proportion of inmates (76 percent and 70 percent, respectively) indicated that on release they planned to spend the majority of their time with new people. Even in Suriname, which had the lowest percentage on this measure, over half of the inmates (51 percent) intended to spend time with new people.

**Figure 65: Intend to Spend Majority of Time with New People on Release**



Exploring the difficulties faced by released inmates is essential when developing public policies to support this population as they reintegrate and, consequently, reduce recidivism and crime rates. To assess the fears that prisoners have about life after incarceration, they were asked about their greatest fears among two sets of situations.

First, inmates were asked which of not having a place to live, not finding a job, or being rejected by their family caused more fear or anxiety (Table 31). More than half of the prison population of Suriname (67 percent) and The Bahamas (56 percent) acknowledged that they were afraid of not getting a job, while an important but much smaller percentage was afraid of being rejected by their family (Bahamas, 30 percent; Suriname, 20 percent). In the other countries, the most feared situation was family rejection (Trinidad and Tobago, 49 percent; Barbados and Jamaica, 45 percent; Guyana, 42 percent), followed by not finding a job (Guyana, 40 percent; Trinidad and Tobago, 30 percent; Barbados, 35 percent; Jamaica, 36 percent). Not having a place to live was of concern to the smallest percentage of inmates in all countries, ranging from 12 percent in Suriname to 21 percent in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.

**Table 31: Biggest Fear–1 (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Not having a place to live	14	21	18	20	12	21
Not finding a job	56	35	40	36	67	30
My family rejecting me	30	45	42	45	21	49

Second, inmates were asked which of being attacked or injured, getting sick or developing an addiction, being re-arrested, or getting killed for what I did was of greatest concern to them (Table 32). Across all countries, the most feared situation was being arrested again, ranging from 59 percent of the inmates surveyed in Guyana to 32 percent in Suriname. The second most feared situation in most countries (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago) was being killed for the crime they committed, ranging from 35 percent in Trinidad and Tobago to 20 percent in Guyana. In Suriname, the second most common fear was being attacked or injured (25 percent), while in The Bahamas it was getting sick or developing an addiction (21 percent).

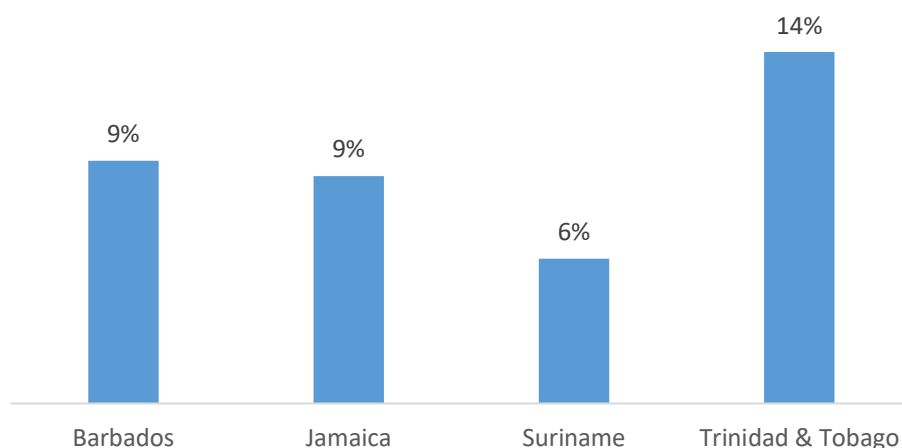
**Table 32: Biggest Fear–2 (percent)**

	Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Being attacked or hurt	8	10	12	10	25	8
Getting sick or developing an addiction	21	13	9	10	24	14
Being arrested again	57	45	59	50	32	43
Being killed because of what I did	15	33	20	31	19	35

While imprisoned, very few prisoners accessed pre-release services that focus on developing relevant skills for life after prison, such as skills related to searching for and securing a job, managing personal finances, managing personal identification documents and registering for health services, searching for housing and community resources, and preparing for family reunification (Angiello, 2005; Mellow and

Dickinson, 2006). The highest incidence of accessing pre-release services—only 14 percent—was observed in Trinidad and Tobago, while the lowest (6 percent) was in Suriname (Figure 67).

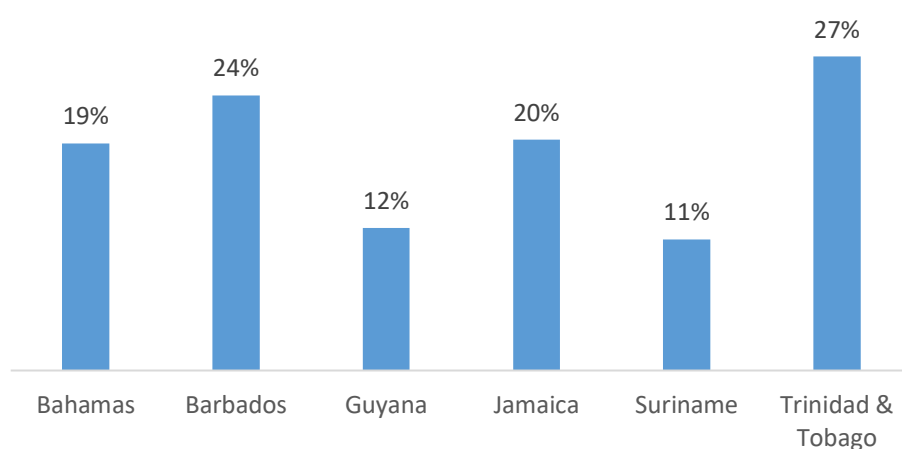
**Figure 66: Accessed Pre-release Services**



*Note:* This question was not included in The Bahamas or Guyana.

The results also show that awareness of government offices or civil agencies that support those who are released from prison was low (Figure 68). This is not surprising given that there is a notable lack of such agencies in Caribbean countries.<sup>21</sup> The highest rate of awareness was in Trinidad and Tobago (27 percent) and the lowest in Suriname (11 percent) and Guyana (12 percent).

**Figure 67: Aware of Government or Civil Agencies that Help People on Release**



<sup>21</sup> Most of the countries studied have agencies that offer some support or advice for job hunting and medical assistance; however, these offices have scarce resources and very low coverage of people leaving prison.

## Summary

The findings from needs assessment studies that were carried out in four Caribbean countries are consistent with the findings in this section.<sup>22</sup>

The results of the inmate surveys show that there is perceived corruption, that force is used within the police service and the prisons, and that there is inconsistent access to rehabilitation and reintegration services. With respect to use of force in prisons, discussions with the authors of the needs assessment reports suggest that many officers believe the conditions of imprisonment should be as harsh as possible to deter prisoners from committing future offenses. Such opinions fail to recognize that prisoners are sent to prison as punishment (deprivation of their liberty), not for punishment by further violence. The situation is exacerbated for pretrial detainees since they should be assumed innocent under the law, but the findings in this report show inmates on remand experience even harsher conditions than convicts.

The experience of imprisonment in some other countries is very different. For example, in Finland and Norway, prisoners' rights are seen as important and inmates are treated with dignity and respect, as people who are expected to return to the community and revert to being fully functioning members of society. Recidivism rates in these two countries are substantially lower than in the Caribbean.

In contrast, treating prisoners with violence and as people without rights further marginalizes them, increasing the possibility of self-fulfilling prophecies and the effects of labeling, and possibly causing prisoners to develop values and attitudes that are more conducive to future offending. If the mindsets of policymakers and prison officials the Caribbean do not change, prisoners will continue to be treated as second class citizens and recidivism rates will continue to be high.

Many Caribbean countries have begun to recognize the importance of restorative justice and restorative practices within the criminal justice system. For example, Trinidad and Tobago has fully embraced and operationalized this approach within its children's court, Guyana has made substantial efforts in training staff within its criminal justice system. In Jamaica, the *Law Reform (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Restorative Justice) Act, 2016*, has been enacted and restorative justice centers have been established in several communities. While in principle this approach is seen as important in Caribbean prisons, it has not been put into practice. One of the barriers may be the mindsets of staff about how prisoners should be treated. The results of the inmate surveys suggest that there is urgent need to take steps in Caribbean countries to change mindsets and attitudes with regard to how prisoners should be treated and how prisons should be run. Protecting the human rights of incarcerated individuals relies on convincing people generally, political leaders, and even inmates that they are entitled to such rights. To achieve public communication, marketing and outreach is key. Training in and implementing a restorative justice approach within the prison systems should also go a long way toward improving the treatment of prisoners and reducing recidivism rates.

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<sup>22</sup> The Inter-American Development Bank funded needs assessment reports for Caribbean prisons in Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Guyana (unpublished).



Another key issue highlighted in this section relates to rehabilitation and reintegration. The results from the inmate surveys suggest that rehabilitation and reintegration programs are carried out in an ad hoc manner such that the services provided do not always match to the needs of prisoners and access in the first place is not consistent. What happens in practice in the majority of Caribbean countries is that a range of rehabilitation and reintegration services are offered, but participation is voluntary and inmates most in need may not volunteer to participate. In addition, with this approach inmates are unlikely to receive services specific to their particular needs. The situation with respect to reintegration services is even worse because they are limited within the prisons and involvement of the prison system ceases once inmates are released into the community. There is no continuity of care, no follow up with prisoners, and extremely limited access to external service providers. What happens after release may be even more important than what happens before release, and the lack of involvement of the prison system, health providers, social services, and other service providers at this critical juncture substantially increases the likelihood of recidivism.

This situation is compounded by the fact that inmates on remand (i.e., not yet convicted) receive little or no access to any rehabilitation or reintegration services and, as survey results show, spend lengthy periods in prison and face some of the same issues as convicted prisoners (see the section about differences in preventative detention and sentenced inmates later in this report). As such, serious consideration must be given to providing rehabilitation services to prisoners on remand. The results also suggest that assistance with reintegration must be provided and that both prisons and external service providers should be involved in such efforts.<sup>23</sup> Failure to provide adequate reintegration services will result in higher recidivism rates and will contribute to an increase in crime rates. The prisons in Caribbean countries must be seen as an important element in reducing crime, not just by the incarceration functions that prisons are designed to serve, but also through programs that decrease the likelihood of recidivism.

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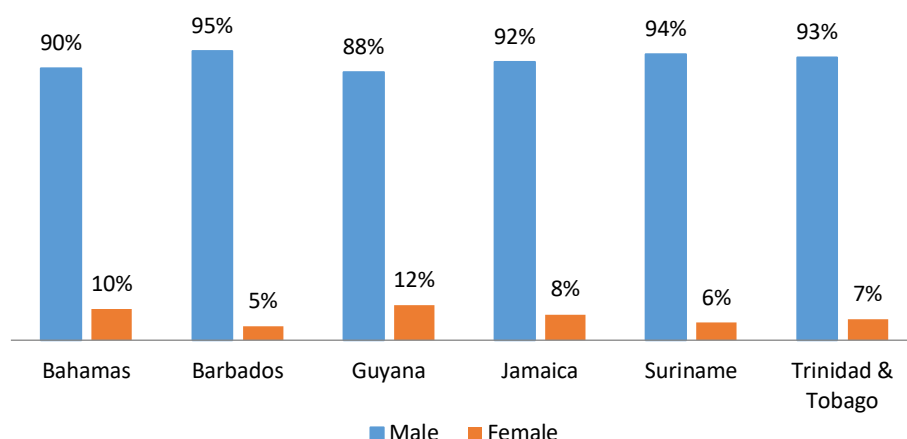
<sup>23</sup> Specifically, the results show high recidivism rates (Figure 27), that very few inmates in any country are aware of service providers that assist with reintegration (Figure 67), and that very few inmates had accessed such services when they were incarcerated the previous time (Figure 66).

## Gender Differences

A robust body of literature shows that there are enormous differences between male and female offenders (Messina, Bloom, and Covington, 2019; Bloom, Owen, and Covington, 2003; Bloom and Covington, 2008). For example, usually women are more likely than men to be the primary caregivers of minor children, to report histories of trauma and abuse, to have substance use and mental health disorders, and to have chronic health issues (Messina et al., 2019; Pollock, 2002). In addition, women in conflict with the law are often non-violent offenders; Bloom, Owen, Covington, 2003, 2004). This section examines differences between incarcerated men and women in the Caribbean, looking at sociodemographic characteristics (i.e., age, having children, incarceration of partners, education, and employment status), childhood, criminal trajectories, due process, living conditions in prison, and violence and security in prison.

Male inmates made up a significantly higher proportion of the prison population than female inmates in all countries (Figure 69). We note that women were overrepresented in the sample to achieve a sample size large enough to analyze.

**Figure 68: Gender**

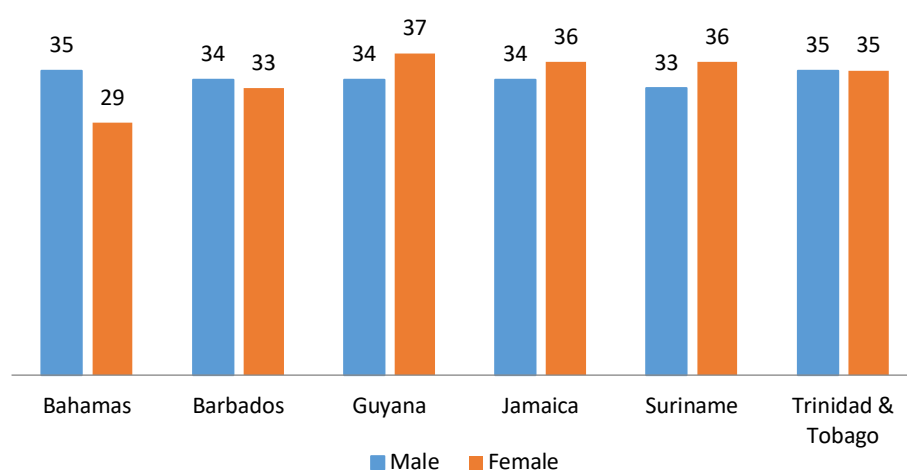


*Note:* The percentages in this graph refer to inmates surveyed for this study, not the prison populations in the countries examined.

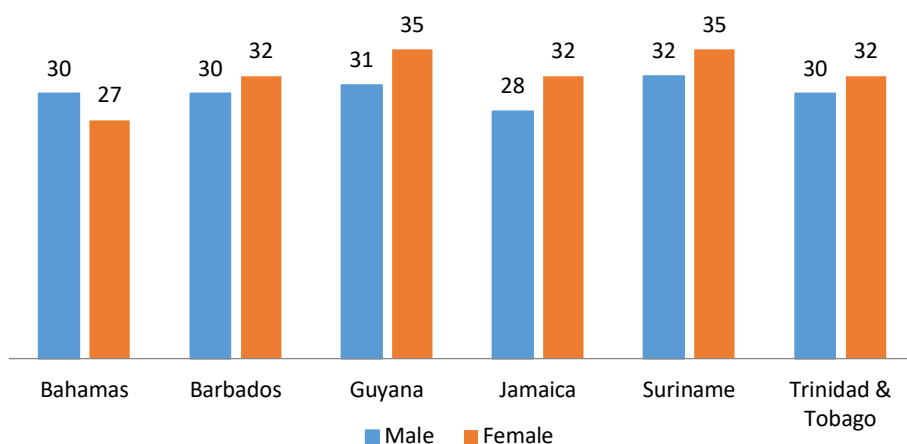
## Sociodemographic Characteristics

### Age

At the time of the interview, the average age of the male inmates was similar across countries studied, at around 33–35 years (Figure 70). In contrast, there was greater variability in the age of the women, ranging from 29 years in The Bahamas to 37 years in Guyana (Figure 70).

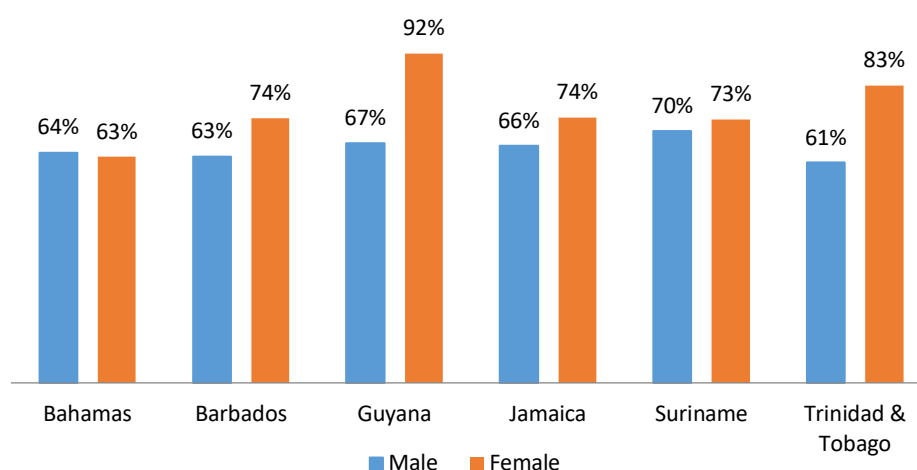
**Figure 69: Age at Time of Survey (5 trimmed mean)**

The age of the inmates at the time of their detention (Figure 71), showed a similar pattern, with the average for men being 28–32 years and the average for women 27–35 years. In general terms, women were arrested at an older age, which is consistent with previous findings that indicate that females begin their criminal careers later in life than males (Herrera Moreno, 2014). Interestingly, the opposite pattern was observed in The Bahamas.

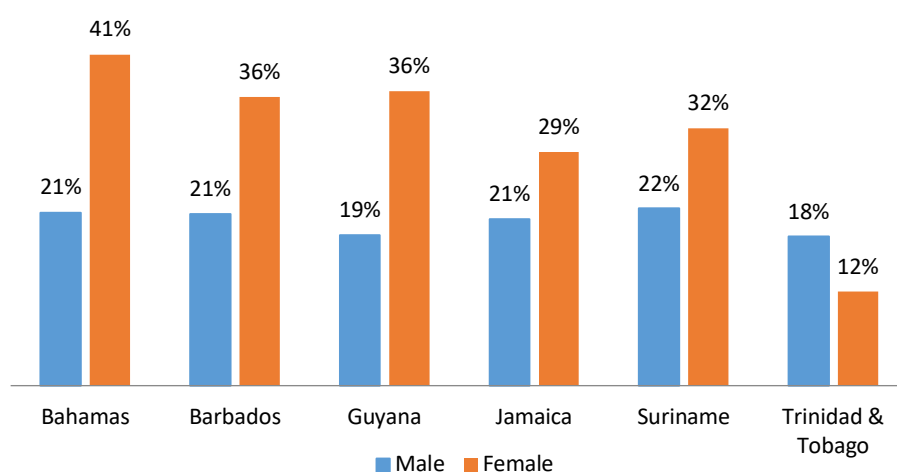
**Figure 70: Age at Time of Current Detention (5 trimmed mean)**

### Children

A greater proportion of the female inmates had children than of the male inmates in the majority of the countries studied (Figure 72), which is consistent with previous research (Antony, 2007; Goetting and Howsen, 1983). The countries where this gender difference was most pronounced were Guyana, where 92 percent of females had children compared to 67 percent of males, and Trinidad and Tobago, at 83 percent of females compared to 61 percent of males. The Bahamas was the only country where more of the male inmates (64 percent) had children than the female inmates (63 percent), but the difference in proportion was also very small in Suriname (males, 70 percent; females, 73 percent).

**Figure 71: Proportion of Inmates with Children**

Not only were more of the women parents than men, the women typically had a greater number of children, except in Trinidad and Tobago. Excluding Trinidad and Tobago, 19 percent to 22 percent of the male inmates had more than three children compared to between 29 percent and 41 percent of the female inmates (Figure 72). In Trinidad and Tobago, 18 percent of the males compared to 12 percent of the females had more than three children.

**Figure 72: Inmate Had More than 3 Children**

A series of studies conducted in Latin America shed light on the effects of incarceration on the children of female inmates. A study carried out by UNODC-SECOPA (2015) on female incarceration in Panama found that a significant proportion of female inmates were heads of their household and main providers and caregivers for their children. When incarcerated, Panamanian women tend to delegate their responsibilities to other close women, usually their mothers or sisters, and often try to continue contributing to the support of their children from prison. The study found that, given the burden that this represents for the caregivers of children, sometimes female inmates distribute the care of their children among different

relatives (UNODC-SECOPA, 2015). This study highlights that it is usually female relatives who take care of children, to a greater extent than their fathers, whose function is usually limited to financial support.

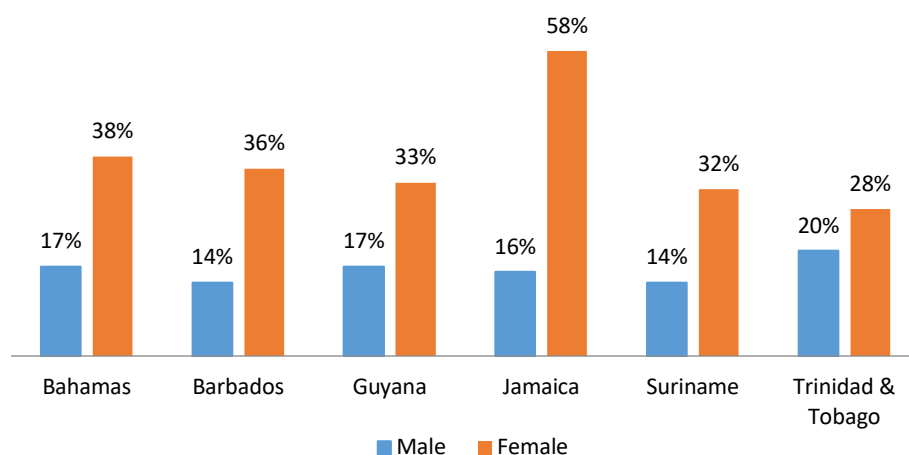
An IDB study of the families of inmates found that the incarceration of parents has several implications for children (Pérez Correa, 2015). The results showed that after a father was imprisoned, his children were usually put under the care of their mother, while after a mother was incarcerated, children tended to be cared for by aunts or grandparents. These findings are similar to the results of the study conducted in Panama. In Mexico, 29 percent of the sample of relatives surveyed indicated that imprisonment of their relative meant they were not able to take their children or grandchildren to the educational center, while for 39 percent it meant not being able to take care of the children at all. This study also found that 34 percent of children had problems in their study center, 34 percent exhibited behavioral problems, 27 percent had anxiety problems, 15 percent were forced to work, and 16 percent were discriminated against for having a parent in prison (Pérez Correa, 2015). Overall these studies show that imprisonment of a parent can have serious consequences for children and that imprisonment of women is especially critical because it increases the vulnerability of the home and can even lead to family breakup (Monclús Masó, 2017).

None of the governments of the Caribbean countries studied for this report make provisions for the children of parents who are incarcerated other than allowing them to visit their parents in prison. In some countries, such as Suriname and Barbados (but not in others like Trinidad and Tobago), inmates are allowed to work for pay, some of which can be remitted for the care of children. However, opportunities for employment are limited and pay in prison is typically very low. Therefore, the children of people incarcerated in the Caribbean are an especially vulnerable population. Quite apart from losing a parent, children are often left behind in impoverished and marginalized communities with other adults who have limited ability to care for them. There is also increased risk of neglect and abuse, for engagement in delinquency and crime, and, in several Caribbean countries, for joining criminal gangs (Sharp, Peck, and Hartsfield, 2012; Murray, 2007; Murray and Farrington, 2006). Therefore, incarceration of parents further marginalizes an already marginalized population. Thus data suggest that serious consideration should be given to the effects of maternal incarceration on children. If measures are not put in place to reduce the likelihood of such children becoming involved in delinquency or crime, then the incarceration of parents could have the unintended consequence of increasing the rates of criminal offending among youth and by extension within Caribbean countries. This can have a multiplier effect if these children grow up, have children of their own, and become incarcerated. Where that happens, the cycle of vulnerability is reproduced.

Hence, the children of incarcerated parents should be considered a population at risk. Measures to mitigate risk could involve social service workers being assigned to visit the families and children of inmates to assess the nature and extent of the risk. Where vulnerabilities are detected, measures should be put in place to assist children in need. Measures may include placing a child in foster or state care, facilitating educational or vocational training, and providing counseling. A first step in managing challenges for children with incarcerated parents should be research into the effects of parental incarceration on their children. A better understanding of the key issues and vulnerabilities for these children would guide the structure and function of any entity set up to address these vulnerabilities.

The results of the inmate surveys show that there were important gender differences in the age at which inmates had their first child (Figure 74). While only 14 to 20 percent of the men in the countries studied had their first child before the age of majority, 28 to 38 percent of the women were mothers by this age, except in Jamaica, where 58 percent of the incarcerated women were teenage mothers. Survey results suggest that imprisoned women are more likely to be teenage mothers and/or have a greater number of children than imprisoned men in the Caribbean, which indicates greater vulnerability for the female inmate population.

**Figure 73: Inmate Had the First Child before the Age of 18**



While there is no Caribbean research on teenage pregnancy, and particularly on the antecedents and outcomes, international research has shown that this is an area of concern. Survey results using two large scale samples from Minnesota showed that adolescent males and females who were victims of sexual abuse were more likely to get or get someone pregnant and were more likely to engage in risky behavior (Saewyc, Magee, and Pettingell, 2004). Using a large sample in Sweden, Coyne, Langstrom, Lichtenstein, et al. (2013a) conducted a 30-year longitudinal study that found that “teenage childbearing was associated with offspring criminal convictions, poor academic performance, and substance-related problems.” Coyne et al. (2013a) argued that

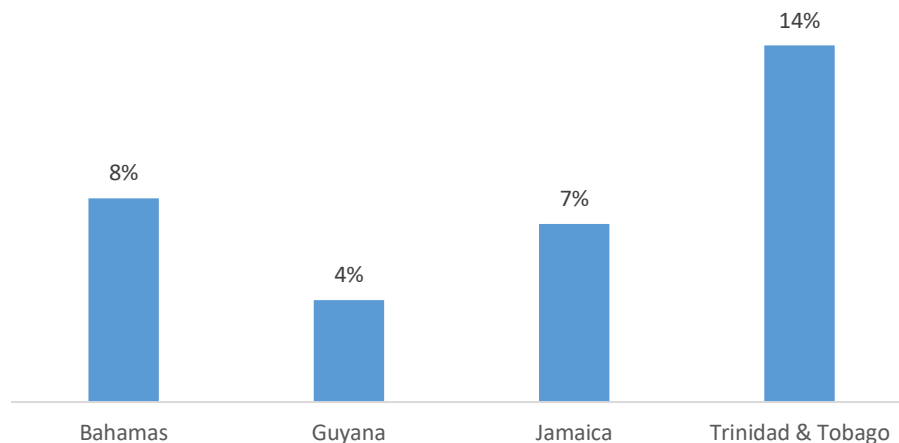
“Teenage childbearing may be associated with offspring violent and non-violent criminal convictions and poor academic performance because of shared familial risk factors, but may also be causally associated with offspring substance-related problems. Their findings suggest that interventions to improve offspring outcomes should delay teenage childbearing and also target risk factors influencing the children of teenage mothers.”

Coyne et al. (2013b) found that children born to mothers who began childbearing earlier were more likely to be convicted of a crime than offspring born to mothers who delayed childbearing. The results from comparisons of differentially exposed cousins born to discordant monozygotic twin sisters provide support for a causal association between maternal age at first birth and offspring criminal convictions. Based on a sample of 85,084 births to first-time mothers aged 15–19 in California, Putnam-Hornstein,

Cederbaum, King, et al. (2015) found that teenage mothers who had a history of abuse were more likely to abuse their children and have Child Protective Services become involved to protect their children.

Overall, the research suggests that difficult childhood environments, especially those in which children are abused, are associated with teenage pregnancy. The research further suggests that early pregnancy can lead to a range of negative outcomes for the children of teenage mothers. Despite this, appropriate interventions can improve some of the negative outcomes of teenage pregnancy. For example, research has shown that Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care is associated with reduced likelihood of teenage pregnancy and with lower rates of arrest and lock-ups (Kerr, Leve, and Chamberlain, 2009). While the research by Kerr et al. (2009) was conducted using female juveniles in the United States, methods based on similar principles (i.e., programs that target delinquency by affecting general risk behavior pathways and contexts) may be useful in Caribbean communities where there are higher than average rates of teenage pregnancy. Outreach activities and activities in schools that increase awareness of teenage pregnancy could also prove to be beneficial. The survey results that showed that inmates are likely to have had children at an early age suggest that teenage pregnancy may have antecedents and outcomes that are similar to those found in international research. Additional research must be done to determine whether there is a connection between early pregnancy and negative outcomes in the Caribbean, and if such associations exist, preventative intervention strategies should strongly consider including a component to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and provide necessary support services to teenage mothers and their children.

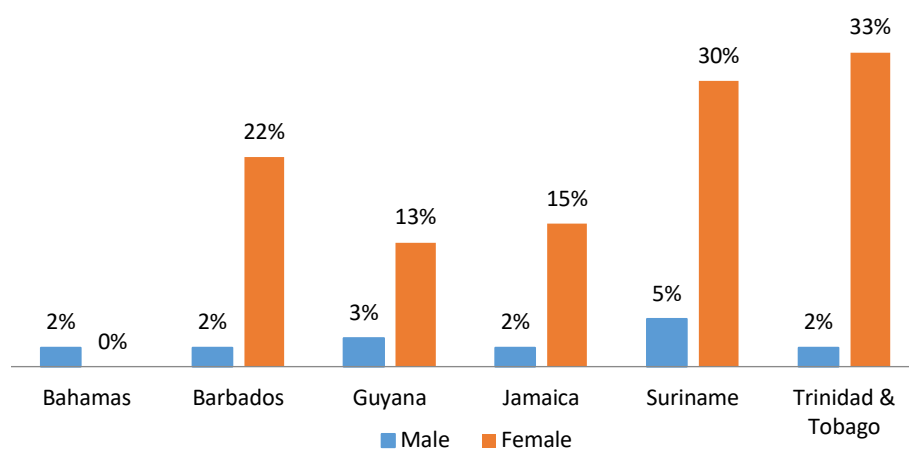
Some female inmates had children living with them in prison, with the highest rate being 14 percent in Trinidad and Tobago, followed by 8 percent in The Bahamas, 7 percent in Jamaica, and 4 percent in Guyana (Figure 75). In Barbados and Suriname, inmates are not allowed to live with their children while in prison. Further research is required to understand the impact of children living with their mother in prison. Several studies suggest prison is an inappropriate place to raise children and that the environment may negatively affect a child's physical, mental, and emotional development (e.g., Vigna, 2012). Other studies have shown that prison environments can be structured such that the outcomes for children are positive (e.g., Goshin, Byrne, and Blanchard-Lewis, 2014).

**Figure 74: Children Live with Inmate in Prison**

Note: Inmates in Barbados and Suriname were not permitted to have children living with them.

### Partners

The survey results showed a significant gender difference in whether the partners of male and female inmates were also incarcerated (Figure 76). The proportion of men who had partners who were simultaneously imprisoned was between 2 percent in The Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica and 5 percent in Suriname. In contrast, for women this figure ranged from 13 percent in Guyana to 33 percent in Trinidad and Tobago. Of note, in The Bahamas, no female inmates had a partner who was simultaneously imprisoned.

**Figure 75: Current Partner Also in Prison**

These results are consistent with prior research that shows that females who commit crimes are likely to be associated with males who commit crimes (Azaola, 2005; Mullins and Wright, 2003; Olmos, 2007). Some authors have suggested that women may become involved in criminal activities as a result of their attachment to a delinquent boyfriend or husband (Mullins and Wright, 2003). It may be that females are



encouraged to take part in such activities since it is perceived that there is a lower likelihood that they will be caught or suspected of illegal activities (Azaola, 2005; Mullins and Wright, 2003; Olmos, 2007).

## Education

Table 33 shows that female inmates had higher educational levels than male inmates in all of the countries analyzed, which is consistent with findings from other parts of the world (Olaeta, 2016; Goetting and Howsen, 1983). In the Caribbean, the proportion of women who completed full secondary education (or more) was higher than for males. For example, in The Bahamas, 61 percent of female inmates completed secondary or higher education compared to 35 percent of the males. Similarly, in Barbados, the rates were 79 percent of female inmates compared to 40 percent of males. Guyana was the only country where the highest proportion of female inmates had incomplete secondary education compared to secondary or higher in the other five countries. The highest educational level achieved by most male inmates was incomplete secondary.

**Table 33: Education (percent)**

		Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Male	Complete primary	3	5	26	15	28	22
	Incomplete secondary	62	55	56	51	42	41
	Complete secondary or more	35	40	18	34	30	38
Female	Complete primary	0	0	28	12	10	12
	Incomplete secondary	39	21	41	25	43	25
	Complete secondary or more	61	79	31	64	47	64

## Work

The socioeconomic context prior to entering prison shows that women were more vulnerable than men. In all countries except Jamaica, the proportion of women who did not work in the month prior to their detention was higher than that of men (Table 34). In Jamaica, 21 percent of men and women were unemployed in the month prior to detention, compared to 53 percent of women and 31 percent of men in Barbados. This gender difference was also observed in the other four countries. These results are consistent with international literature, which indicates that a greater proportion of women are unemployed immediately before their imprisonment (Goetting and Howsen, 1983; Owen and Bloom, 1995; Olaeta, 2016; Antony, 2007).

Regarding the percentage of women and men who never worked (Table 34), in Guyana, Jamaica, and Suriname, the percentage of women who never worked was higher than that of men. In The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago, the opposite pattern was observed, while in Barbados no differences were observed.

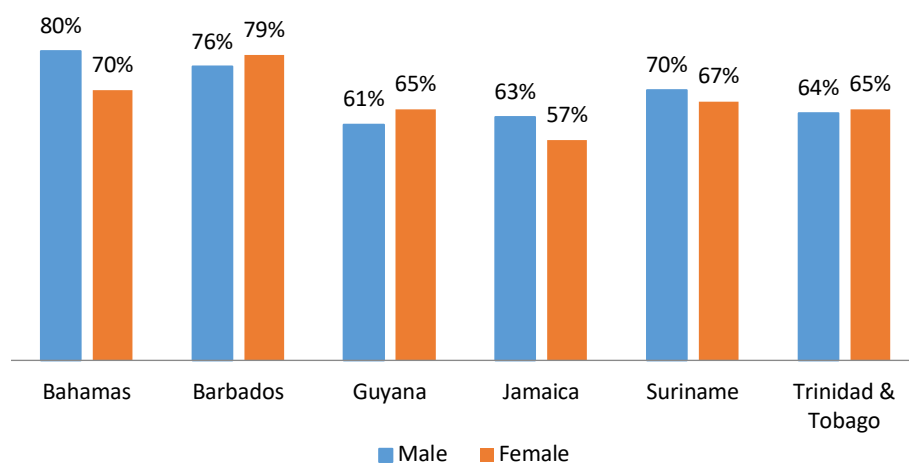
**Table 34: Worked in the Month Prior to Detention (percent)**

		Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Male	Never worked	3	5	4	7	3	8
	No	27	31	11	21	18	23
	Yes	70	65	85	73	80	69
Female	Never worked	0	5	8	8	10	4
	No	38	53	24	21	28	27
	Yes	62	42	68	71	62	69

### Childhood

Generally, men and women in correctional centers have experienced difficult childhoods with scarce opportunities. In The Bahamas, Jamaica, and Suriname a higher percentage of male inmates had been physically punished by a parent or guardian than of the female inmates (Figure 77). In Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago the opposite trend was observed. We note, however, that gender differences are small, with The Bahamas having the largest gender difference (80 percent of men versus 70 percent of women).

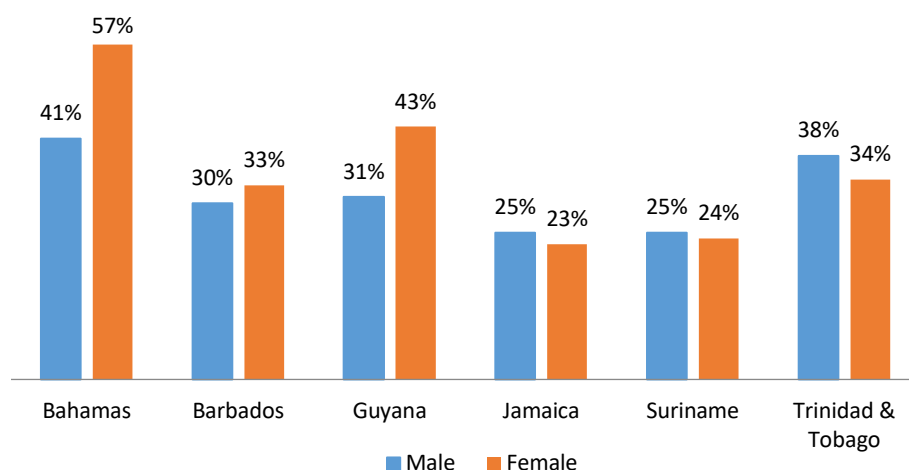
It is important to mention that, while these figures may appear high compared to those in developed countries, in the Caribbean physical punishment is largely an acceptable part of “good parenting.” Physical punishment of children by parents has not been outlawed in the Caribbean and in many nations in the region physical punishment is an accepted disciplinary practice within schools (UNICEF, 2006). While physical punishment is accepted, it is not expected to be severe. Given this information, it is not surprising to find that the majority of inmates were physically punished by their parents or guardians.

**Figure 76: Physically Punished by Parents or Guardians as a Child**

The survey also asked about experiences of indirect violence (i.e., violence between parents) (Figure 78). In The Bahamas, Barbados, and Guyana, more of the women suffered from this form of violence than men, with the biggest difference in The Bahamas (41 percent of the men; 57 percent of the women), followed by Guyana (31 percent of the men; 43 percent of the women). These pronounced differences in

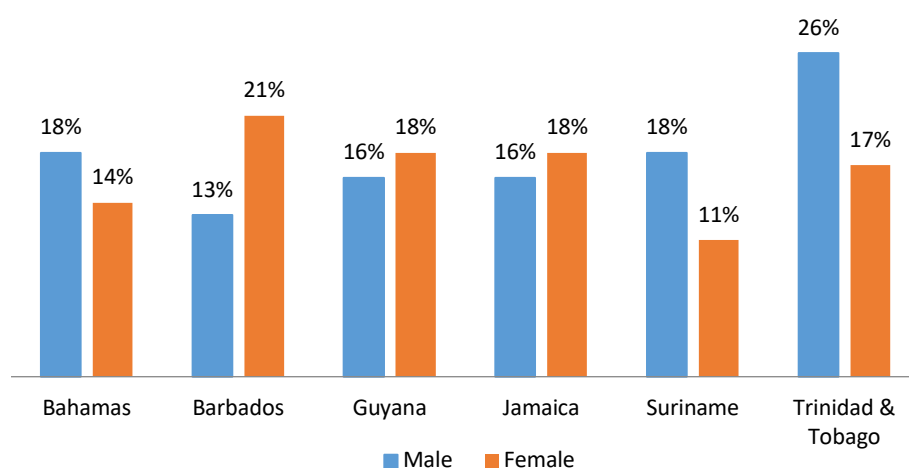
The Bahamas and Guyana indicate that the women were more vulnerable. In Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, the opposite pattern was observed and the differences were smaller.

**Figure 77: Father or Partner Ever Beat Inmate's Mother**

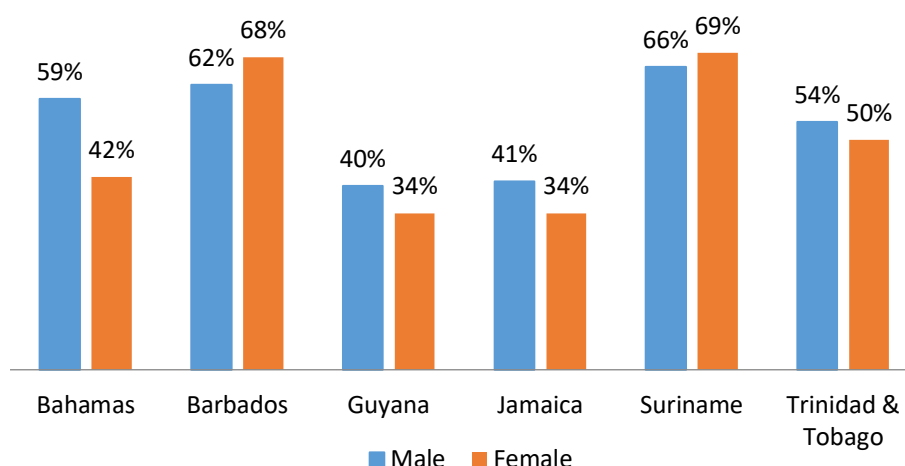


Some of the inmates left home at an early age (before 15 years) (Figure 79). In The Bahamas, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, more of the male inmates had left home before they turned 15, while in Barbados, Guyana, and Jamaica, the female inmates were more likely to leave home at an early age. The differences were most pronounced in Barbados (13 percent of the men; 21 percent of the women) and Trinidad and Tobago (26 percent of the men; 17 percent of the women), but in Barbados the women were more vulnerable and in Trinidad and Tobago the men were.

**Figure 78: Left Home before Age 15**



In The Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, more of the male than the female inmates surveyed said that a family member had been in prison at some point (Figure 80). In Barbados and Suriname, the opposite trend was observed. However, the gender differences were small, with the most pronounced being in The Bahamas (59 percent of the male inmates; 42 percent of the female inmates).

**Figure 79: A Family Member Has Been in Prison**

Overall the results show that the lives of many of the male and female inmates were characterized by physical punishment, family violence, family members with criminal records, and early departure from their family homes. Barbados was the only country where women seemed to come from more hostile contexts than men. In Barbados, female inmates grew up in environments with a greater presence of criminal records in the family, they left their homes earlier, and they were victims of physical punishment and experienced indirect violence during childhood to a greater extent than the male inmates. In the other five countries, there were no precise gender patterns because of differences depending on the indicator.

### Criminal Trajectories

The inmate surveys asked inmates questions related to their criminal behavior, looking at their most recent *criminal conduct*, describing different aspects of the crime for which they were incarcerated, and at their *criminal trajectory*, relating different aspects of their past criminal conduct.

### Criminal Conduct

Previous research shows that women are most frequently imprisoned for crimes related to drug trafficking and/or possession of drugs (Azaola, 2005; Olaeta, 2016; Antony, 2007; Ruidíaz García, 2011; Almeda Samaranch, Di Nella, and Navarro Villanueva, 2011; Bloom, Chesney-Lind, and Owen, 1994; Owen and Bloom, 1995). The results of the inmate surveys are partially consistent with these findings. Women were imprisoned most commonly for drug-related crimes in Guyana (54 percent), Suriname (43 percent), Barbados (33 percent), and Trinidad and Tobago (31 percent) (Table 35). For male offenders, these percentages were lower (Guyana, 17 percent; Suriname, 9 percent; Barbados, 16 percent; Trinidad and Tobago, 12 percent). In Trinidad and Tobago, the percentage of the female inmates incarcerated for homicide was the same as those in prison for drug-related offenses (31 percent). In The Bahamas, the most common crime among the women was robbery (28 percent), and in Jamaica, the most common crime was homicide (37 percent).

Among the men, the most common criminal activities were robbery and homicide (Table 35), which is consistent with findings from other parts of the world (Ruidíaz García, 2011). A greater proportion of male

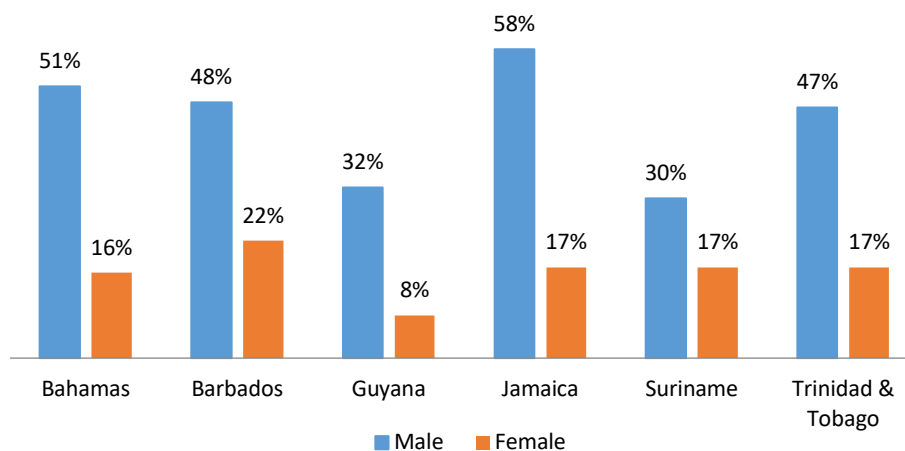
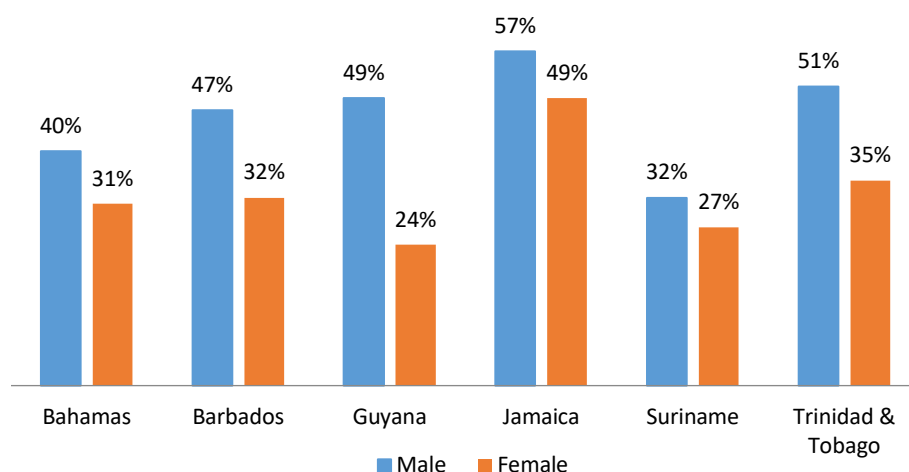
inmates were detained than females for sexual crimes and illegal possession of weapons in all countries except Barbados. In Barbados, there was a higher percentage of women than men whose most serious crime was a sexual offense. In Trinidad and Tobago, females (8 percent) were more likely than males (6 percent) to be imprisoned for possession of an illegal weapon.

**Table 35: Most Serious Crime Incarcerated for by Gender (percent)**

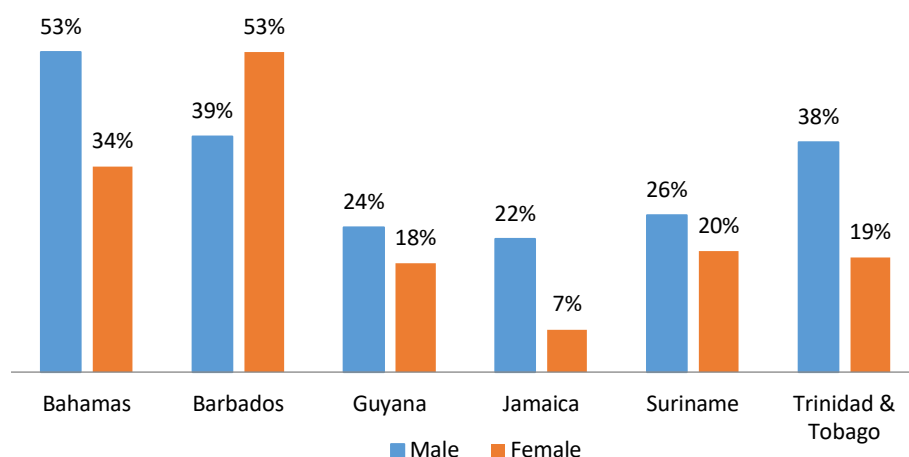
		Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Male	Robbery	26	26	23	12	47	23
	Homicide	24	26	41	42	10	41
	Traffic/drug possession	21	16	17	1	9	12
	Other crimes*	11	18	12	23	23	16
	Sex crimes	8	4	4	11	10	3
	Possession of illegal weapons	11	10	3	10	1	6
Female	Robbery	28	11	3	3	10	6
	Homicide	17	22	26	37	20	31
	Traffic/drug possession	21	33	54	15	43	31
	Other crimes*	24	22	16	42	23	25
	Sex crimes	0	6	0	0	3	0
	Possession of illegal weapons	10	6	0	3	0	8

\* Other crimes include driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, neglect in childcare, fraud, money laundering, bribery, violence, and fights.

The results suggest that women commit fewer violent crimes than men. In all of the countries studied, men were more likely to have carried a firearm than women when the crime was committed (men, between 30 and 58 percent; women, 22 percent or less) (Figure 81). The results also show that men were imprisoned more often than women for crimes that caused physical harm to third parties (men, 32 to 57 percent; women, 24 to 49 percent) (Figure 82). International research supports the finding that males are more likely than females to commit violent crimes (Moloney, van den Bergh, and Moller, 2009; Almeda Samaranch et al., 2011; Bloom et al., 1994; Goetting and Howsen, 1983).

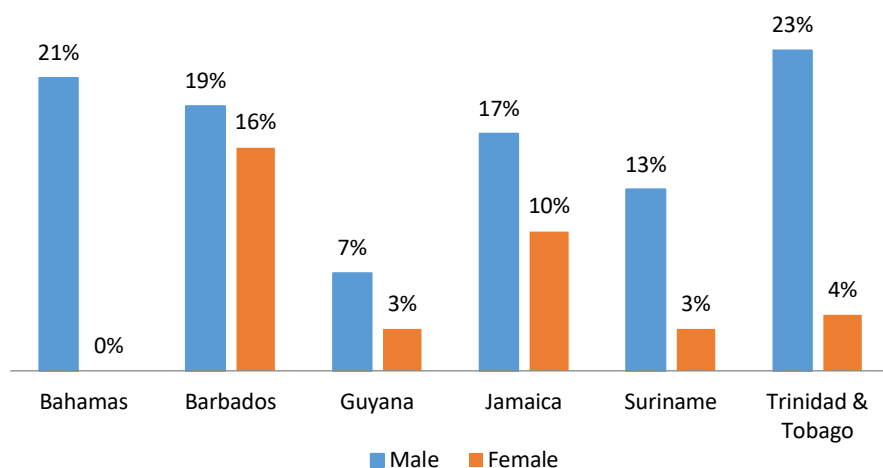
**Figure 80: Officials Said a Weapon Was Carried at Time of Crime****Figure 81: Third Parties Suffered Physical Injuries**

In all countries except Barbados, males were more likely than females to have used drugs or alcohol in the six hours prior to committing the crime for which they were incarcerated (Figure 83). The most pronounced gender differences were in The Bahamas (men, 53 percent; women, 34 percent) and Trinidad and Tobago (men, 38 percent; women, 19 percent). In Barbados, in contrast, more females (53 percent) than males (39 percent) had used drugs and/or alcohol before committing their crime.

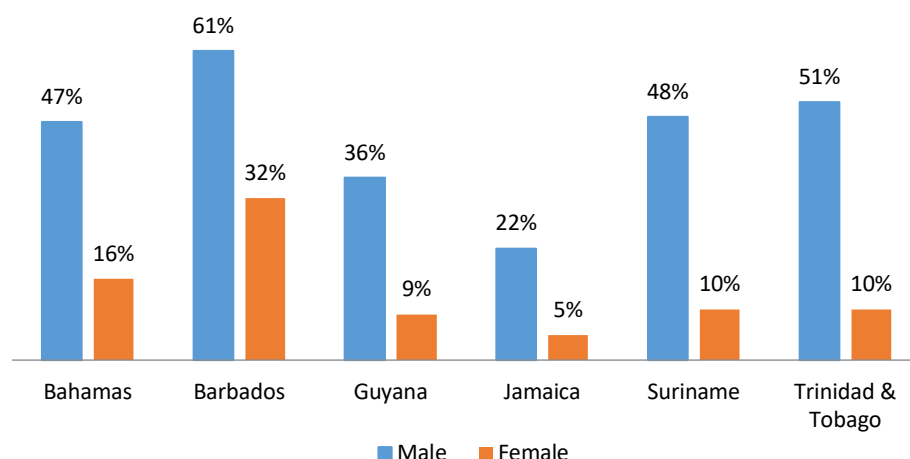
**Figure 82: Used Alcohol or Drugs within 6 Hours of Crime**

### Criminal Trajectories

The female inmates not only committed fewer violent crimes but they also had shorter criminal trajectories than the male inmates. In all countries, male inmates were more likely than female inmates to have spent time in a juvenile detention center (Figure 84). The largest difference was in The Bahamas, where 21 percent of the males compared to 0 percent of the females had spent time in a juvenile facility. Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, 23 percent of the male inmates had served time in a juvenile facility compared to only 4 percent of the female inmates. In Barbados, the difference was much smaller at 19 percent of the males and 16 percent of the females.

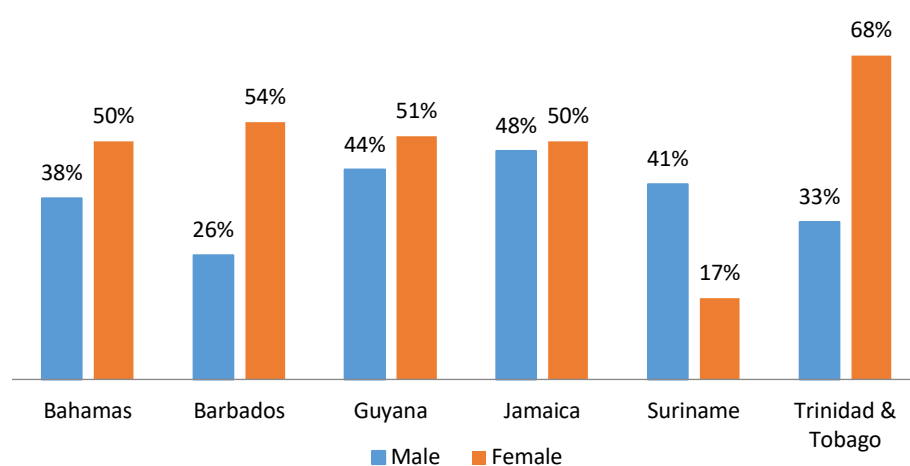
**Figure 83: Served Time in Juvenile Detention Center**

Similar gender differences were observed for recidivism rates (Figure 85). The proportion of male inmates who had previously been in prison ranged from 22 percent in Jamaica to 61 percent in Barbados, while the proportion of female inmates who were recidivists ranged from 5 percent in Jamaica to 32 percent in Barbados.

**Figure 84: Previously Imprisoned for Another Crime**

### Due Process

Several questions were asked of the respondents to examine due process. When asked how much they understood about the process (Figure 86), in all countries except Suriname, female inmates were more likely than male inmates to indicate that they understood little or very little of what happened during their trials. The most pronounced gender differences were in Barbados (26 percent of the men understood little or very little compared to 54 percent of the women) and Trinidad and Tobago (men, 33 percent; women, 63 percent). In contrast, in Suriname, 41 percent of the men compared to 17 percent of the women understood little or very little of the proceedings.

**Figure 85: Understood Little or Very Little about Hearings and Court Proceedings**

Understanding what happens during the criminal process is a key right of the system of legal guarantees and safeguards (Binder, 1993). Any person who is accused of committing an offense must have the right not only to access information but also to a correct understanding of their situation. Where this is absent

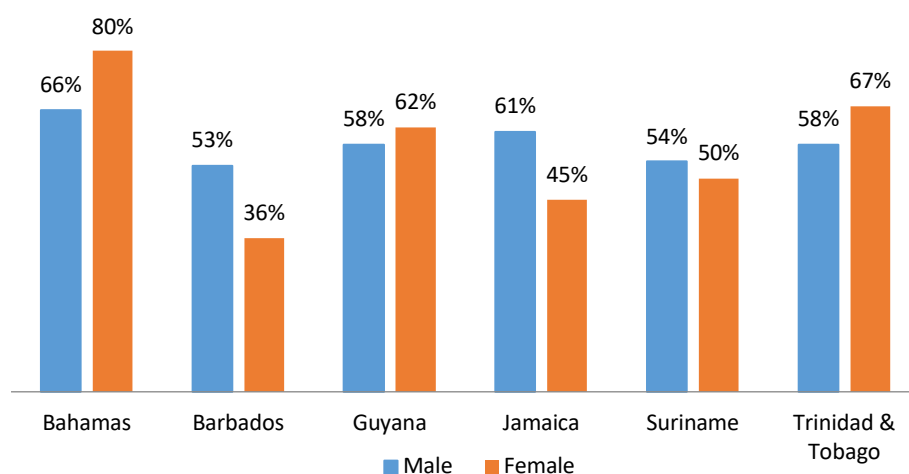


or limited, their vulnerability is increased and they become more limited in their ability to defend themselves. In this sense, an unfavorable situation exists in the Caribbean, especially for women, since they claim to have a poor understanding of legal processes.

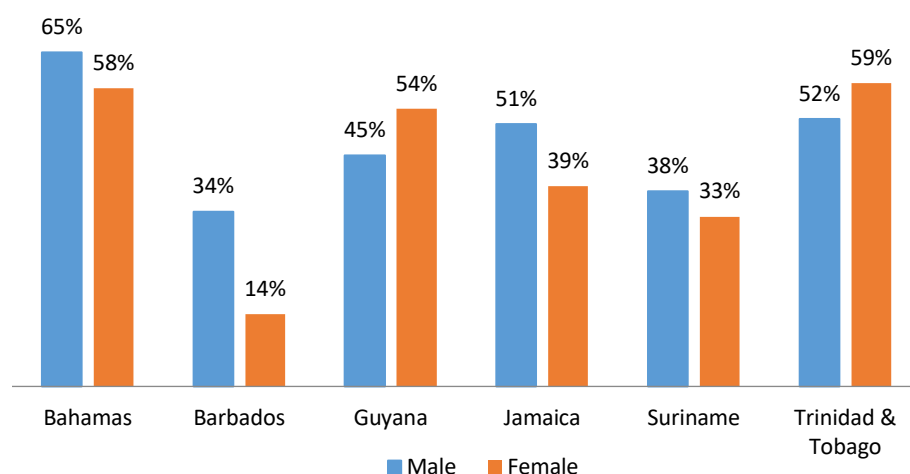
There are various potential reasons for the differences between how much men and women understand the judicial process. One possibility is the amount of contact males and females have with the criminal justice system since female inmates are less recidivistic than male inmates. Another possible explanation is the gender difference in self-perception regarding knowledge and skills. Several psychology studies have found that men tend to have more confidence in their knowledge than women and that women underestimate their abilities compared to men (Beyer, 1990; Beyer and Bowden, 1997; Gneezy, Niederle, and Rustichini, 2003; Ifcher and Zarghamee, 2016). Thus, women may feel that they do not understand what happens during the judicial process, while men may be more confident in their knowledge, but there were no questions to actually test their knowledge so the difference is perception.

When asked how much they felt the magistrate listened to what they had to say, a significant proportion of both men and women said that the magistrate listened little or very little (Figure 87). The gender differences were mixed. In The Bahamas, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, women were more likely than men to claim that they were heard little or very little by the judge. In contrast, in Barbados, Jamaica, and Suriname, the opposite trend was observed.

**Figure 86: Magistrate Listened Little or Very Little**



When asked how they felt about the defense they were provided by their lawyer (Figure 88), more of the male inmates than the female inmates in The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Suriname claimed to have been defended little or very little by their lawyer. The opposite pattern was observed in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

**Figure 87: Lawyer Defended Little or Very Little**

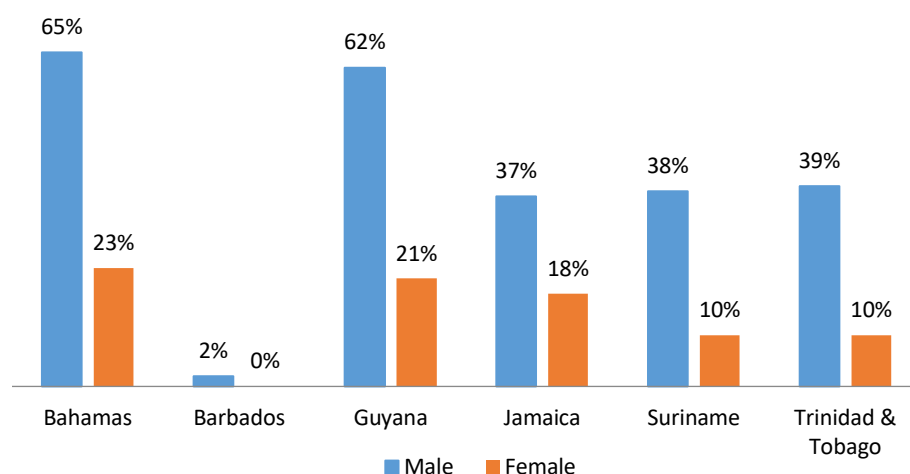
Because the differences between countries for each of the indicators of due process are inconsistent, we cannot draw a definitive conclusion about a gender pattern common to the Caribbean region. Suriname was the only country where men’s experience was more negative than women’s for all three indicators. In Suriname, males were more likely than females to claim that they understood little or very little of what was happening in their trial, and males were more likely than females to claim that they received inadequate treatment from both the judge and the lawyer. In contrast, in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, the results show that women were more disadvantaged than men according to the three indicators, women were more likely than men to claim that they understood little of the process and that they received poor treatment from judges and attorneys.

There were no distinct gender patterns in due process in The Bahamas, Barbados, or Jamaica, with the results varying depending on the indicator. For example, in The Bahamas, treatment by the judge and understanding of the process suggest a more adverse situation for women, while treatment by the lawyer indicates a more adverse situation for men. On the contrary, in Barbados and Jamaica, treatment by the judge and the lawyer suggest to a more adverse situation for men, while understanding of the process indicates a more adverse situation for females.

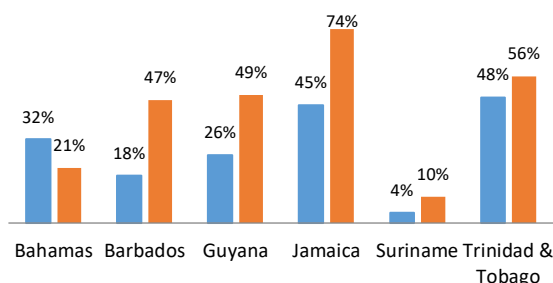
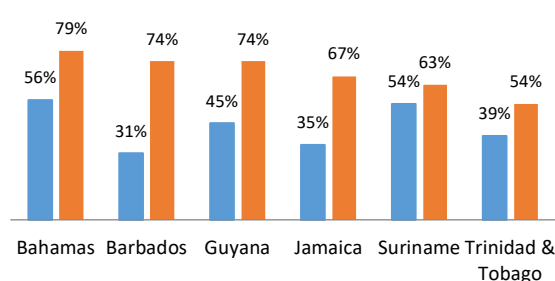
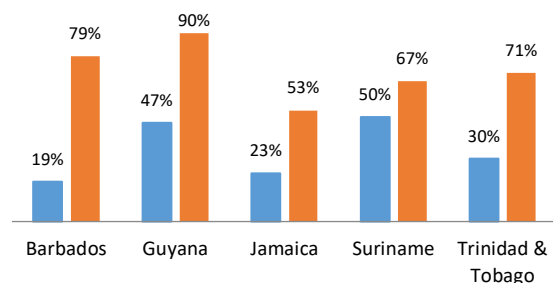
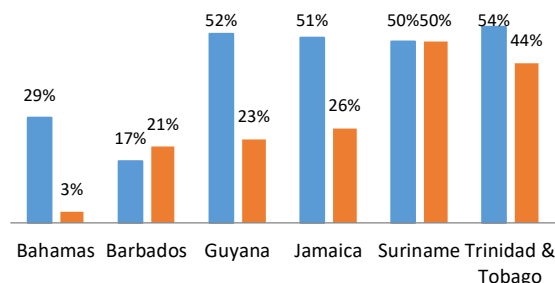
### Living Conditions in Prison

Prison conditions in the Caribbean are more favorable for females than for males.

In all countries, male inmates experienced overcrowding to a greater extent than female inmates (Figure 89). These differences were very pronounced in The Bahamas, where 65 percent of males compared to 23 percent of females resided in overcrowded conditions, and in Guyana, where 62 percent of males compared to 21 percent of females lived in overcrowded cells. The lowest levels of overcrowding were in Barbados, where 2 percent of the males and none of the females lived in overcrowded conditions.

**Figure 88: Overcrowding**

Looking at activities available in prison, again female inmates were in a more favorable situation than male inmates. In all countries, women were more involved in *educational activities* (except in The Bahamas) (Figure 90), in *work activities* (Figure 91), and in *cleaning and maintenance* (Figure 92). In contrast, men participated more in *sporting activities* (Figure 93) in The Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, while in Barbados, females participated more in sporting activities. There were no gender differences for this indicator in Suriname.

**Figure 89: Participated in Education****Figure 90: Worked Inside Prison****Figure 91: Participated in Cleaning or Maintenance****Figure 92: Participated in Sports**

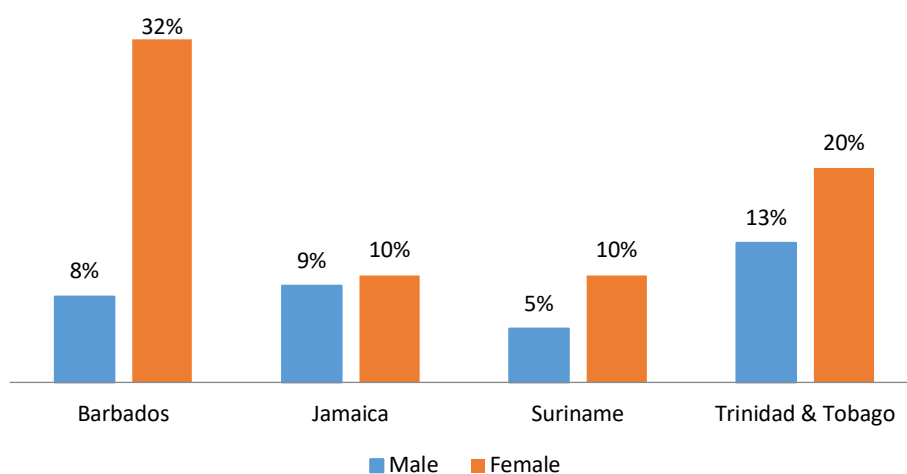
These findings are consistent with studies carried out in Latin America that suggest the activities and dynamics within the prisons in the region tend to reproduce traditional gender roles. That is, men participate

more in sports, while women are more involved in cleaning and maintenance (Antony, 2008; Lagarde, 1993, 2003; Rodríguez, 2003). Even in the prison system, women are seen as in charge of the home, while sport is considered a male domain (Muñoz Niño, 2015).

While gender roles in the Caribbean are changing, and more so for younger generations, older people may still adhere to more traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Barriteau, 2003; Chevannes, 2001). In traditional gender roles, women play a more important role in the home and in nurturing a family, while men are expected to provide and have roles external to the family. In the Caribbean, women have been advancing educationally faster than men, and thus have penetrated the labor market and other sectors of society. Traditional gender roles are being displaced by ideas of equality, with changing roles and expectations. While it appears that changing gender roles have not yet affected the activities that males and females participate in while incarcerated, changing norms in the general population may translate to changes in prisons in the future.

The results of the inmate surveys show that women were more involved than males in labor and educational activities within the prisons. In general terms, this seems to suggest a more positive situation for women if activities inside the prison are considered tools for re-socialization. Along these same lines, women, more than men, seemed to be accessing services in prison to help their reintegration once they were released (Figure 94). For example, 32 percent of the female inmates in Barbados accessed pre-release services, compared to only 8 percent of their male counterparts. Similarly, 20 percent of females compared to 13 percent of males accessed pre-release services in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Figure 93: Accessed Pre-release Services in Prison**



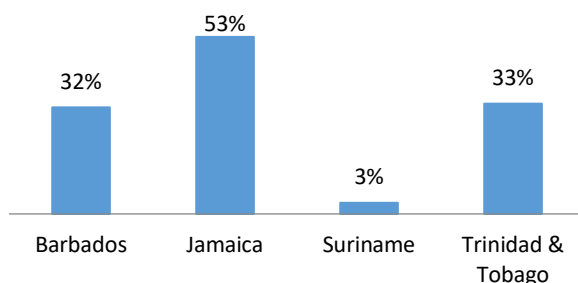
The female respondents were asked if they had ever had a gynecological examination while in prison and if the prison provided feminine hygiene products.

In Jamaica, 53 percent of the women surveyed said they had had a gynecological examination in prison, the highest of the four countries that provided this information (Figure 95). The lowest rate was in Suriname, at only 3 percent (Barbados, 32 percent; Trinidad and Tobago, 33 percent). These data are worrying but consistent with studies conducted in other parts of the world that indicate that prisons do not have

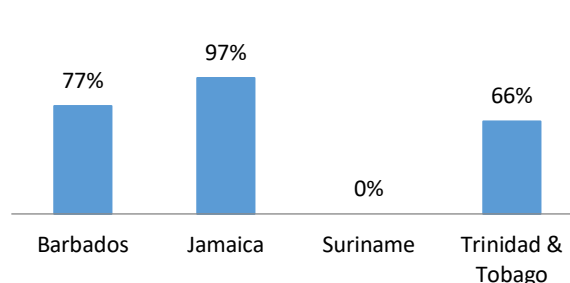
healthcare systems that adequately cater to the specific needs of women (Nari, Fabre, Hauser, et al., 2000; Antony García, 2003; Cárdenas, 2011). Calotti (2013) stated that the absence of a public health policy aimed at women's prisons is one of the main gaps in the Latin American prison system.

The percentage of women provided feminine hygiene products by the prison ranged from 97 percent in Jamaica to none of the women in Suriname, a most alarming result (Figure 96). In Barbados, 77 percent of the women were provided feminine hygiene products, and in Trinidad and Tobago, 66 percent.

**Figure 94: Received Gynecological Examination**



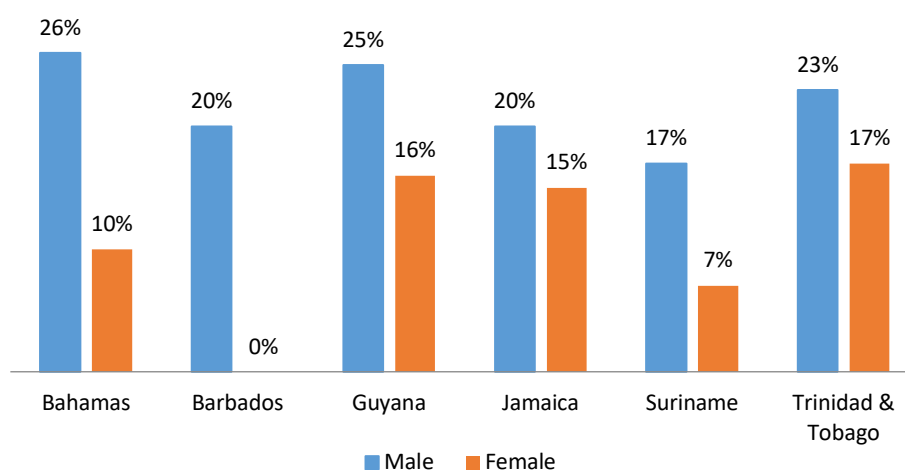
**Figure 95: Provided with Tampons or Pads**



*Note:* For female inmates only. These questions were not asked in The Bahamas or Guyana.

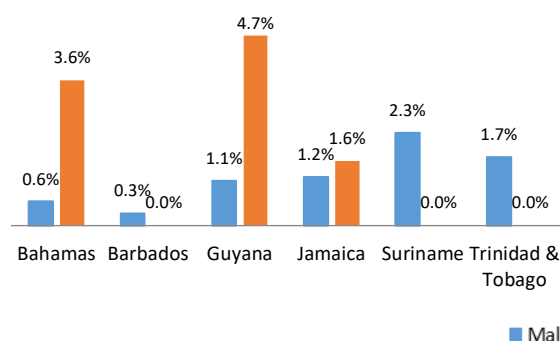
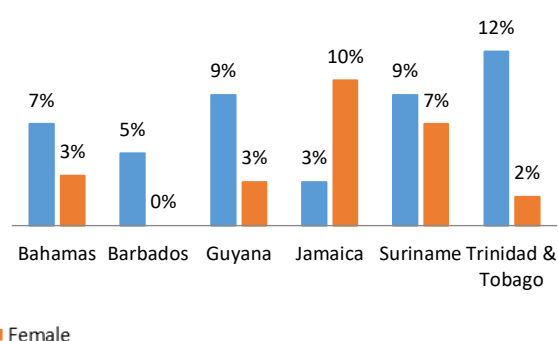
## Violence and Security in Prison

In all Caribbean countries, female inmates experienced lower levels of physical violence than male inmates. Inmates were asked if they had been attacked or beaten within the previous six months. The proportion of male inmates who were beaten ranged from 26 percent in The Bahamas to 17 percent in Suriname, compared to a range of 17 percent of the women in Trinidad and Tobago to none in Barbados (Figure 97). Other than in Barbados, the largest difference was in The Bahamas, where 26 percent of the men were attacked in the previous six months compared to 10 percent of the women. The smallest difference was in Jamaica, where 20 percent of the men compared to 15 percent of the women said they had been attacked or beaten. These results are consistent with other studies however, there have been increases in physical violence in women's prisons in Latin America (CELS, 2011). Longitudinal data will be required to determine whether there is a similar trend in the Caribbean.

**Figure 96: Attacked or Beaten Within the Previous 6 Months**

With regards to sexual violence, the results are less clear. In The Bahamas, Guyana, and Jamaica, a greater percentage of the women indicated that they were forced to have sex than of the men, although the percentages were low for all countries (Figure 98). Guyana stood out, with almost 5 percent of the women having been victims of sexual violence, compared to 1 percent of the men. The greater likelihood that women are victims of sexual abuse has been documented in other countries (Lagarde, 1993; Makowski, 1995; Azaola and Yacamán, 1996; Lagunas and Sierra, 1997). In contrast, in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Suriname, the data show that males experienced higher levels of sexual violence than females, and in all three of these countries none of the women said they had been forced to have sex.

Given the tendency to underreport sexual victimization, inmates were also asked whether they had witnessed other people being forced to have sex (Figure 99). In all countries except Jamaica, males reported witnessing sexual violence more than females. The percentage of males ranged from 12 percent in Trinidad and Tobago to 3 percent in Jamaica. The percentage of female inmates ranged from 10 percent in Jamaica to 0 percent in Barbados. The biggest difference was in Trinidad and Tobago, where 12 percent of the men and 2 percent of the women witnessed sexual abuse, and the smallest difference in Suriname, at 9 percent of the men and 7 percent of the women. As noted, in Jamaica, women (10 percent) were more likely than men (3 percent) to witness sexual abuse.

**Figure 97: Forced to Have Sex since Arrest****Figure 98: Witnessed Another Inmate Being Forced to Have Sex**

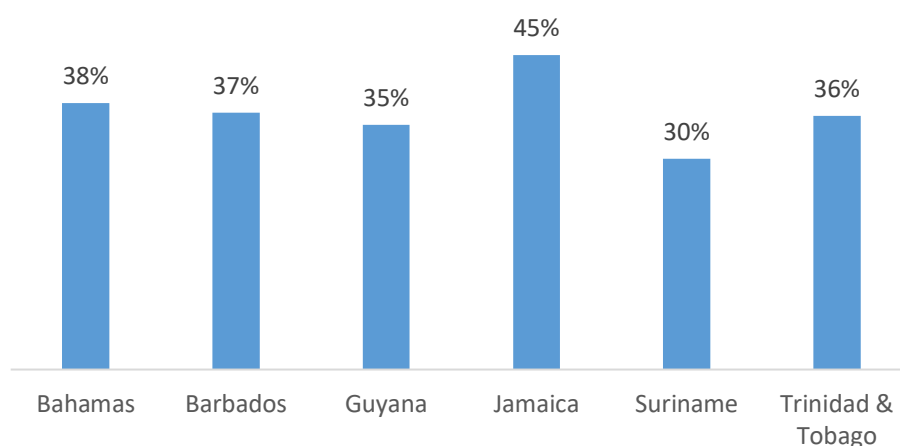
In all countries, male inmates witnessed sexual violence more than they reported experiencing it. For the female inmates, reporting sexual abuse was higher than experiencing it in Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Jamaica. However, in Guyana (3 percent witnessed, 5 percent reported) and The Bahamas (3 percent witnessed, 4 percent reported) witnessing sexual victimization was lower than experiencing it (in Barbados, none of the women reported witnessing or experiencing sexual violence). Generally, these findings suggest that personal sexual victimization is under-reported and that Guyana has a higher than average rate of sexual victimization of females.

The data also show that in all countries except Jamaica, males were more likely than females to witness the sexual victimization of other inmates. Given that male and female prisons are segregated, this implies that when male inmates witness acts of sexual victimization that other males are the victims, and likewise, when females witness acts of sexual victimization that other females are the victims. If the estimates of witnessing sexual violence are accurate, the rate of sexual violence in male prisons is higher than that in female prisons.

## Age Differences

The issue of age can be studied from the standpoint of age at detention and age at the time the survey was conducted. The tables and graphs presented here are based on the age of detention, with young inmates being those that were arrested between the ages of 18 and 25 years, and adult inmates being those who were older than 25 years when they were arrested. The results show that more than 30 percent of the prison population in the Caribbean countries studied were young, with Jamaica having the highest proportion (45 percent) and Suriname having the lowest (30 percent) (Figure 100).

**Figure 99: Young When Arrested**



## Sociodemographic Characteristics

In general terms, both the young and the adult populations were concentrated in the intermediate educational level (incomplete secondary education). The proportion of young inmates with this level of education ranged from 47 percent in Suriname to 73 percent in The Bahamas (Table 36). The proportion of adult inmates with incomplete secondary education ranged from 34 percent in Trinidad and Tobago to 53 percent in The Bahamas. In all countries, adults were more likely than young inmates to have completed their secondary or attained higher levels of education. The largest difference was in The Bahamas, where 45 percent of the adult inmates had secondary or higher education compared to only 24 percent of the young inmates. The lowest difference was in Suriname, where just over 30 percent of all inmates had completed secondary or higher education.

Adults may have attained higher levels of education because they had more time before coming into contact with the justice system. In other words, the educations of younger inmates may have been halted by their incarceration. If this is accurate, opportunities for educational advancement are important within the prisons and younger inmates should be encouraged to advance their education while in prison.



**Table 36: Education (percent)**

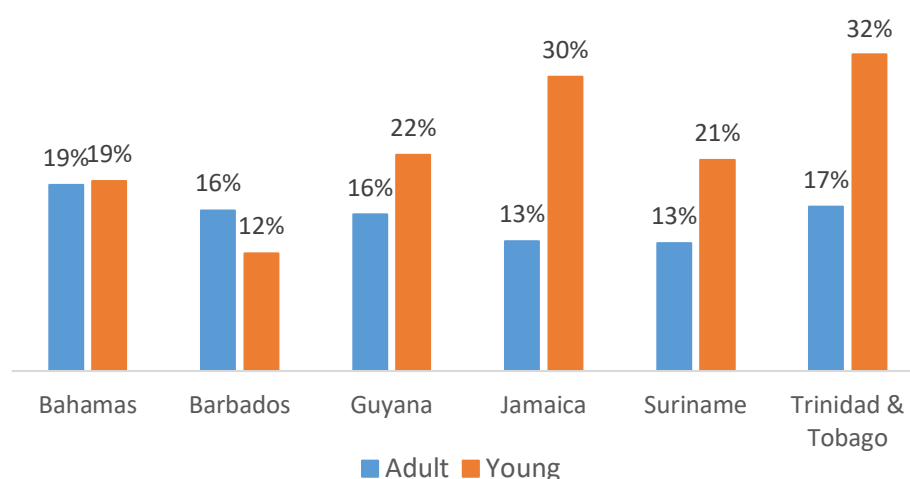
		Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Adult	Complete primary	3	7	28	19	28	25
	Incomplete secondary	53	46	50	41	40	34
	Complete secondary or more	45	47	23	40	32	41
Young	Complete primary	3	1	19	9	22	13
	Incomplete secondary	73	66	68	61	47	51
	Complete secondary or more	24	33	14	30	31	36

Respondents were asked whether they had worked in the month prior to being arrested (Table 37). The results suggest that young people were more vulnerable since, in all countries, the percentage of inmates who did not work in the month before their arrest—although they had worked at some time in their lives—was greater for young people than for adults. In The Bahamas, Barbados, and Guyana, the difference was between 3 and 4 percent, while in Jamaica (15 percent of adults vs. 27 percent of youth), Suriname (16 percent vs. 23 percent), and Trinidad and Tobago (20 percent vs. 30 percent), the difference was greater. The results also show that the percentage of young people who never worked was higher than the percentage of adults who never worked in all countries. Overall, these results suggest that younger inmates have weaker integration into the labor market compared to adults.

**Table 37: Worked in Month Prior to Arrest (percent)**

		Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Adult	Never worked	3	1	3	3	2	5
	No	26	31	11	15	16	20
	Yes	71	67	86	82	82	75
Young	Never worked	4	11	7	12	6	11
	No	30	33	14	27	23	30
	Yes	66	56	79	61	71	59

In most countries, except The Bahamas and Barbados, more of the young inmates were adolescent parents than adult inmates (Figure 101), which is another feature of vulnerability. The countries with the greatest differences were Jamaica (adults, 13 percent; young, 30 percent) and Trinidad and Tobago (adults, 17 percent; young, 32 percent). The country with the smallest difference was The Bahamas where there was no difference at 19 percent for both young and adult. While between 13 percent (in Jamaica and Suriname) and 19 percent (in The Bahamas) of the adults were adolescent parents, between 12 percent (in Barbados) and 32 percent (in Trinidad and Tobago) of young people had their first child before they turned 18.

**Figure 100: Had First Child at 18 or Earlier**

### Characteristics of Crimes Committed

In all countries, except Suriname, the most frequent crime for which young people were imprisoned was homicide (Table 38). In Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, the proportion of young people detained for homicide exceeded 40 percent (reaching 50 percent in Trinidad and Tobago). In Suriname, most of the young people were incarcerated for robbery (58 percent). In the adult population, the most common crime varied by country. Adults were detained most commonly for homicide in Guyana (40 percent), Jamaica (38 percent), and Trinidad and Tobago (35 percent), for robbery in Barbados (26 percent) and Suriname (40 percent), and for drug-related offenses in The Bahamas (28 percent). Generally, more adults were incarcerated than youths for sex and drug-related crimes, while young people were more commonly held for homicide, weapons-related crimes, and theft.

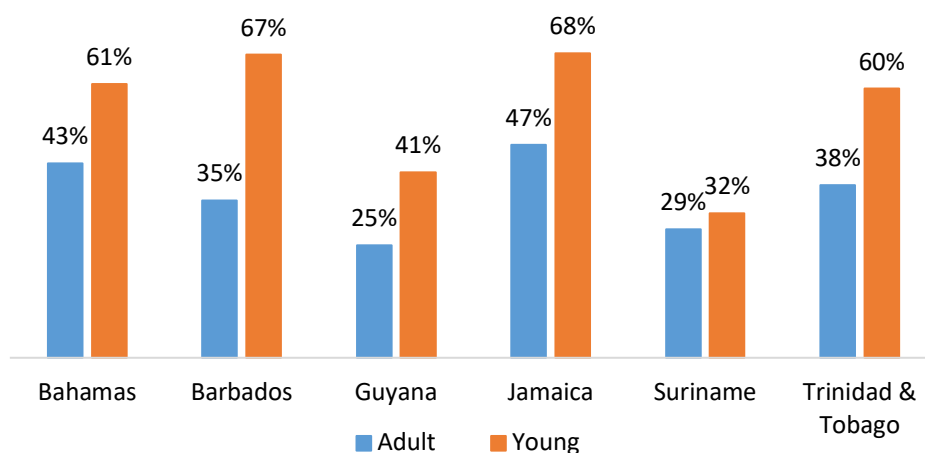
These results suggest that young people commit more violent crimes than adults. In all countries, except Guyana, more young people were incarcerated for crimes that caused physical harm, ranging from 40 to 66 percent, while the proportion for did not exceed 50 percent in any country.

**Table 38: Crime (percent)**

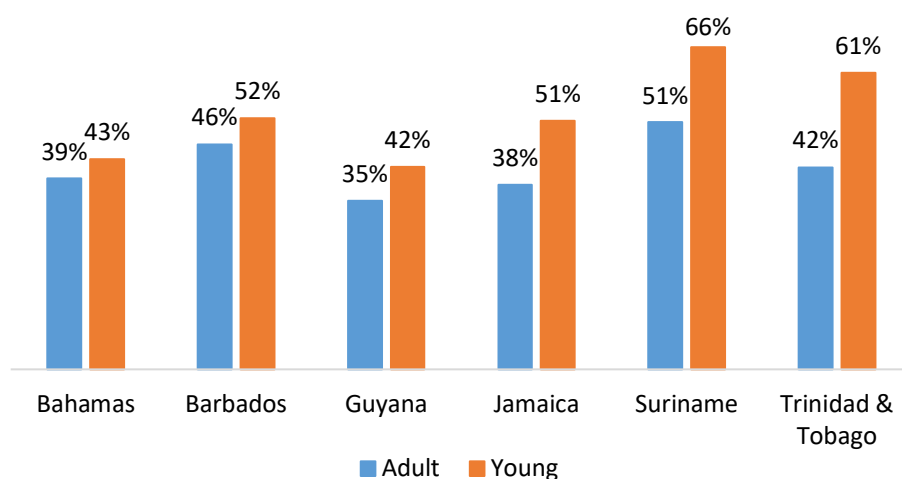
		Bahamas	Barbados	Guyana	Jamaica	Suriname	Trinidad & Tobago
Adult	Robbery	24	26	17	10	40	20
	Homicide	20	21	40	38	10	35
	Drugs	28	24	23	3	12	16
	Other*	12	17	14	25	26	21
	Sex Crimes	10	4	4	16	11	4
	Weapons	7	8	2	8	1	5
Young	Robbery	30	25	31	14	58	26
	Homicide	31	35	41	47	16	50
	Drugs	10	5	12	1	7	7
	Other*	11	20	9	23	14	10
	Sex Crimes	3	3	4	4	5	1
	Weapons	16	13	3	11	1	7

\* Other crimes include arson, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, negligence in childcare, fraud, money laundering, bribery, violence and fighting crimes, among others.

In all countries young people were more likely than adults to be in possession of a weapon when committing their crime (Figure 102). The largest difference was in Barbados, where 67 percent of the young people were in possession of a weapon compared to 35 percent of adults, and the smallest difference in Suriname (adults, 29 percent; young, 32 percent).

**Figure 101: Officials Said Inmate Was Carrying a Weapon during Crime**

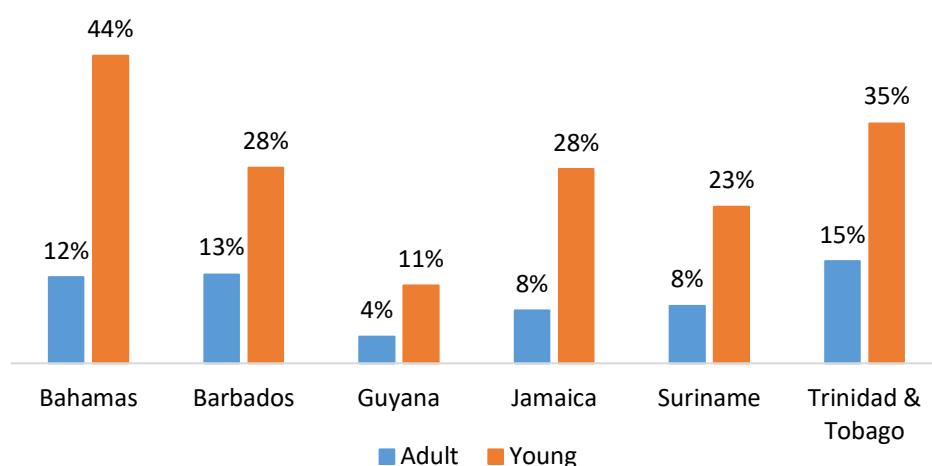
In all countries, more young people were not alone when committing their criminal acts than adults (Figure 103). The largest difference was in Trinidad and Tobago, where 61 percent of young people committed offenses that involved others, declining to 42 percent for adults. The smallest difference was in The Bahamas, where 43 percent of young people compared to 39 percent of adults committed crimes that involved accomplices.

**Figure 102: Other Person(s) Involved in the Crime**

### Criminal Trajectory

In addition to the findings that young people commit more violent crimes, the results also show that they were held in juvenile detention centers in greater proportions than adults, had greater contact with firearms, and began using firearms earlier in life.

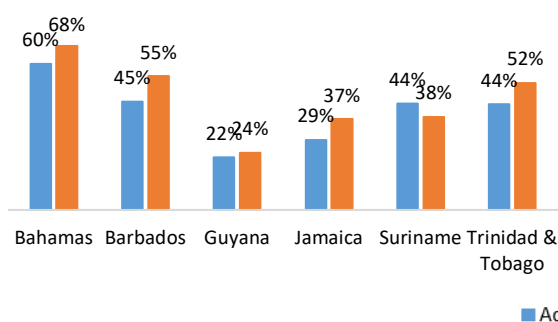
In all countries, the young inmates had been in juvenile detention centers more commonly than the adults, and the difference was very pronounced (Figure 104). The largest difference was in The Bahamas, where 44 percent of the young inmates had been incarcerated in a juvenile center compared to 12 percent of the adults. The smallest difference was in Guyana, where 11 percent of the young compared to 4 percent of the adults had been in a juvenile center. Of note, Guyana had the smallest percentage of both young and adult inmates who had been in a juvenile center. The results suggest that institutionalization in youth facilities is much more common among the young prison population.

**Figure 103: Had Been in a Juvenile Detention Center**

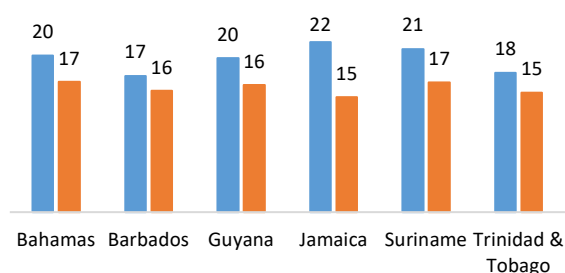
Young people also had greater access to firearms than adults in all countries except Suriname (Figure 105). The greatest difference was observed in Barbados, where 55 percent of the young had owned a firearm at some point compared to 45 percent of the adults, and the smallest in Guyana (young, 24 percent; adult, 22 percent). In Suriname, the difference was opposite, with fewer young inmates (38 percent) compared to adults (44 percent) having owned a firearm.

The results also show that young people began using weapons at an earlier age than adults in all countries studied (Figure 106). The greatest age difference was observed in Jamaica, where the average age at which young people began to own firearms was 15 years, while among adults it was 22 years. The age at which young people began to own firearms ranged from 15 to 17 years compared to the range for adult inmates of 18 to 22 years.

**Figure 104: Inmate Ever Owned a Firearm**



**Figure 105: Age First Had Firearm (5 trimmed mean)**

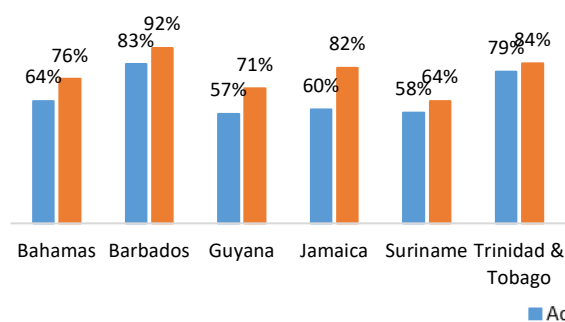
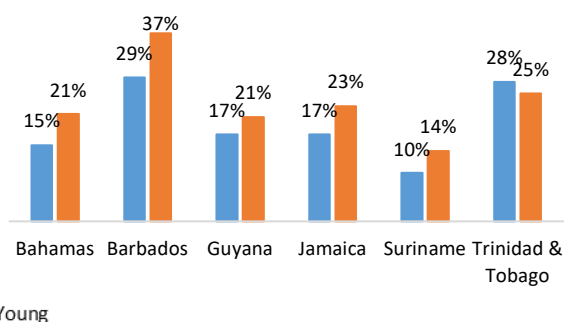


## Drug Use

Drug use was more prevalent among young than among adult inmates in all countries studied (Figure 107). The difference was most pronounced in Jamaica, where 82 percent of the young reported having used illegal drugs compared to 60 percent of the adult inmates, and least pronounced in Trinidad and Tobago (adults, 79 percent; young, 84 percent).

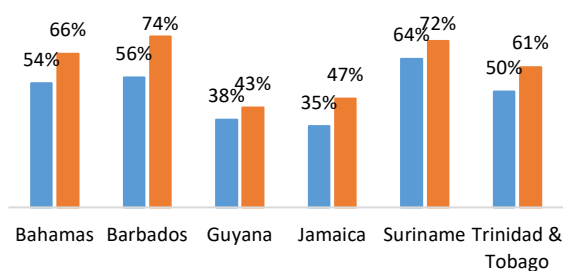
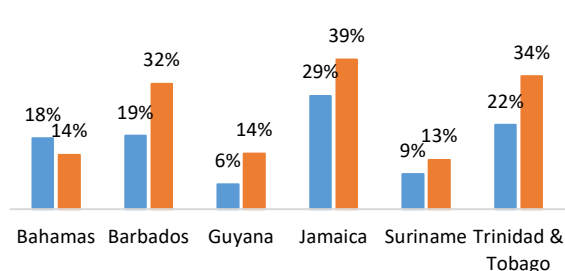
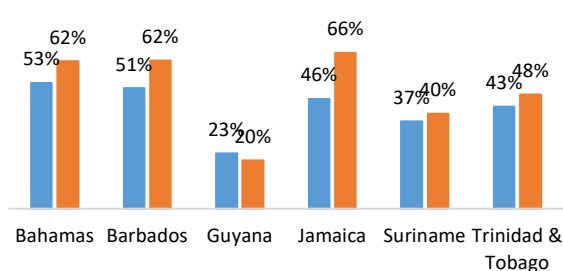
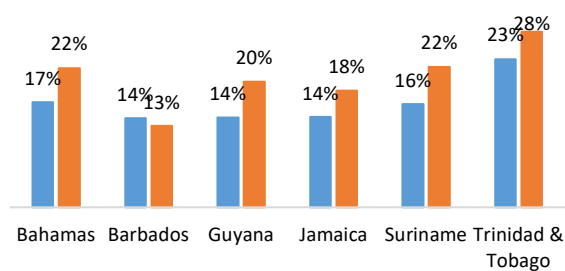
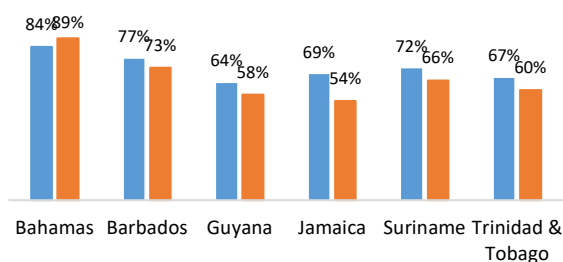
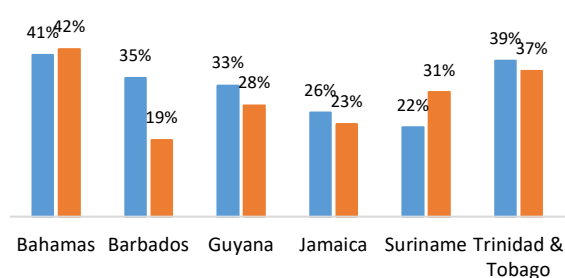
The results also show that young inmates were more likely than adults to have started using drugs at an earlier age in all countries studied, except Trinidad and Tobago (Figure 108). The largest difference was in Barbados, where 37 percent of young inmates had tried at least one illegal substance by the age of 12 compared to 29 percent for adults.

Overall, the results show that drug use was more prevalent among inmates who had been arrested when they were younger (18 to 25 years old) than among those who were adults when arrested, and that the younger inmates also started to use drugs at an earlier age than adult inmates.

**Figure 106: Tried at Least One Drug****Figure 107: Tried One Drug at 12 Years or Younger**

### Socialization Environment

Generally, all inmates had childhoods marked by scarce opportunities but, broadly speaking, the results suggest that inmates incarcerated younger came from more hostile contexts than those imprisoned when they were adults, except regarding experiencing and witnessing violence in the home. In most countries studied, young were more likely than adult inmates to have family members who had been in prison (Figure 109), to have had childhoods characterized by drug use (Figure 110), to have been raised in neighborhoods with criminal gangs (Figure 111), and to have left home at an earlier age (Figure 112). In contrast, in most countries, the adults were raised in more violent households, having both experienced physical abuse and seen their mothers physically abused more than the younger inmates (Figures 114 and 115).

**Figure 108: Family Member Has Been in Prison****Figure 109: Parent/Guardian Used Drugs****Figure 110: Gangs in Childhood Neighborhood****Figure 111: Left Home Before Age of 15****Figure 112: Physically Punished as Child****Figure 113: Witnessed Mother Beaten by Partner**

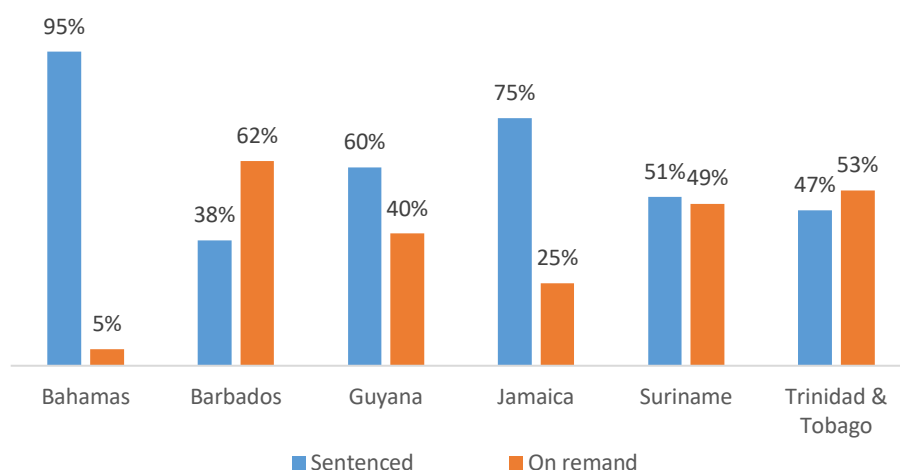
■ Adult ■ Young

## Differences between Inmates on Remand and Convicts

This section of the report looks at differences between the respondents who had already been sentenced and those who were being held on remand based on overcrowding, violence in prison, perceptions of safety in prison, work in prison, education, and sporting activities in prison.

Across the different countries examined, there were differences in the proportion of the prison population that had been sentenced. The highest levels of sentenced inmates were in Jamaica (75 percent) and The Bahamas (95 percent, but see note to Figure 115) and the lowest in Barbados (38 percent).

**Figure 114: Judicial Status**



*Note:* Researchers in The Bahamas were primarily allowed access to convicted inmates, therefore the figures for that country do not reflect the proportion of convicted and on remand inmates.

## Living Conditions in Prison

States must guarantee the human rights and dignity of inmates, regardless of their legal status, while imprisoned. Thus, knowing about any differences in the treatment that individuals receive within the prison based on their legal status (sentenced vs. on remand) is essential to assess whether prisoners' rights are being upheld. It is important to point out that prison conditions that respect human rights contribute to prisoners being more likely socially reintegrated.

It is worth mentioning that in most of the samples a large proportion of the inmates on remand were charged with homicide (ranging from 65 percent in Guyana to 29 percent in Barbados, with Suriname being the exception at 8 percent), theft (from 44 percent in Suriname to 13 percent in Jamaica), sex crimes (from 17 percent in The Bahamas to 2 percent in Barbados), and drug-related crimes (from 17 percent in The Bahamas to 1 percent in Jamaica).

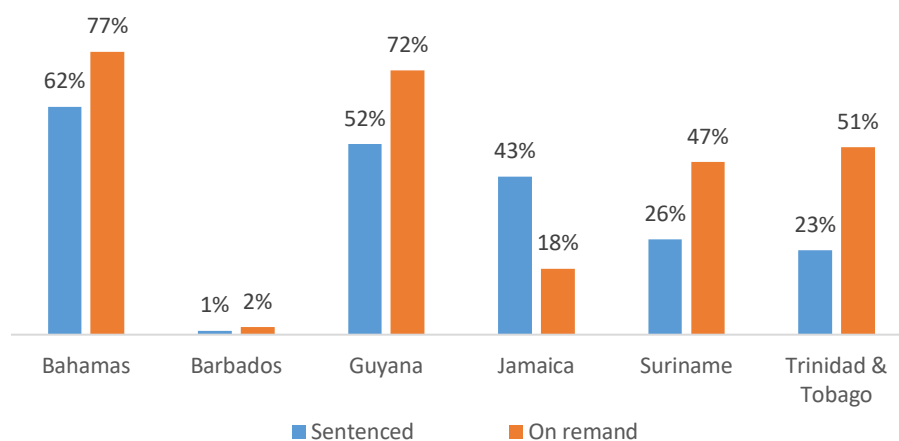
## Overcrowding

In all countries except Jamaica, more inmates on remand lived in overcrowded conditions (facilities housing more people than for which they were designed) than those who had already been sentenced (Figure 116). The highest overcrowding overall was in The Bahamas, with 77 percent of inmates on remand



and 62 percent of those sentenced living in overcrowded conditions, and the lowest in Barbados (sentenced, 1 percent; on remand, 2 percent). The biggest discrepancy was in Trinidad and Tobago, with 23 percent of sentenced compared to 51 percent of on remand inmates living in overcrowded conditions. In contrast, in Jamaica, more sentenced inmates (43 percent) were overcrowded than inmates on remand (18 percent).

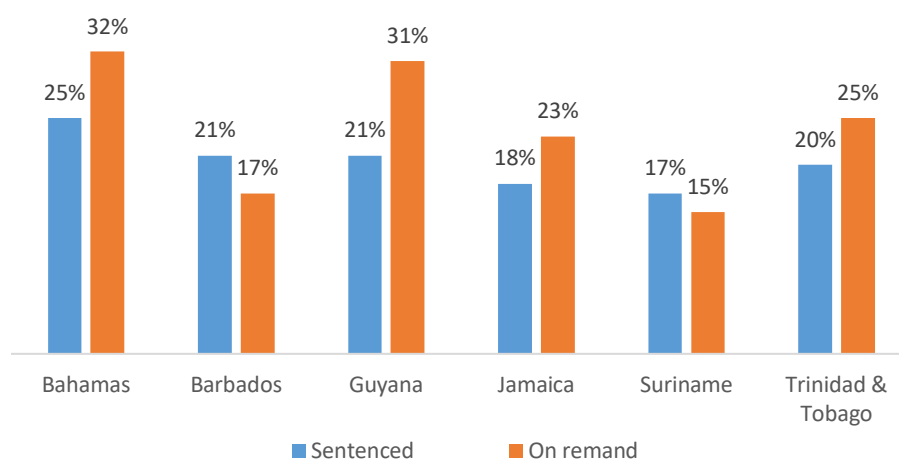
**Figure 115: Overcrowding**



### Safety

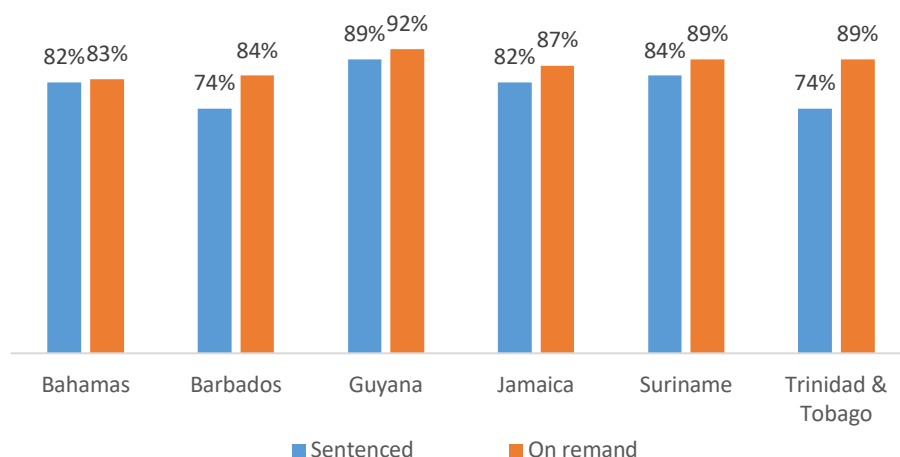
The results also show that individuals in pretrial detention experience higher levels of victimization in all countries except Barbados and Suriname (Figure 117). The largest difference was in Guyana, where 31 percent of on remand inmates were attacked or beaten in the previous six months compared to 21 percent of the sentenced inmates. The smallest differences were in Barbados (sentenced, 21 percent; on remand, 17 percent) and Suriname (sentenced, 17 percent; on remand, 15 percent), which were also the countries where sentenced inmates experienced more physical violence in prison than those on remand.

**Figure 116: Attacked or Beaten in Previous 6 Months**



In all countries, inmates on remand felt less safe in prison than they did where they lived before they were arrested compared to sentenced prisoners (Figure 118). Although the differences were not pronounced, the fact that this pattern was observed in all countries suggests a trend.

**Figure 117: Feel Less Safe in Prison than Where Lived Prior to Arrest**

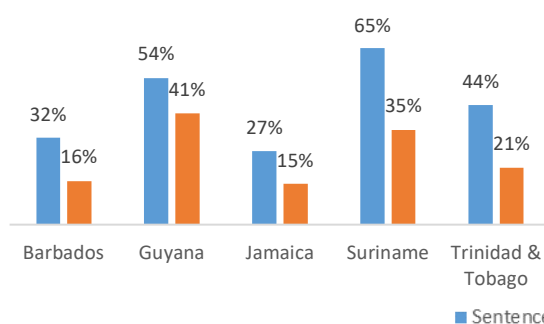
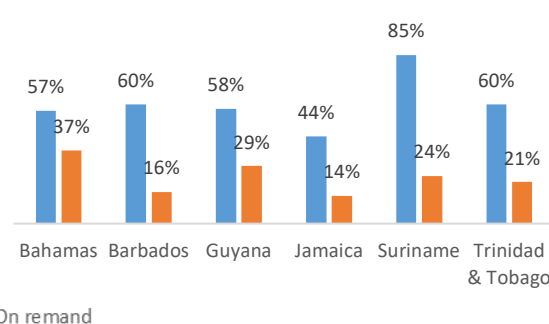


### Activities

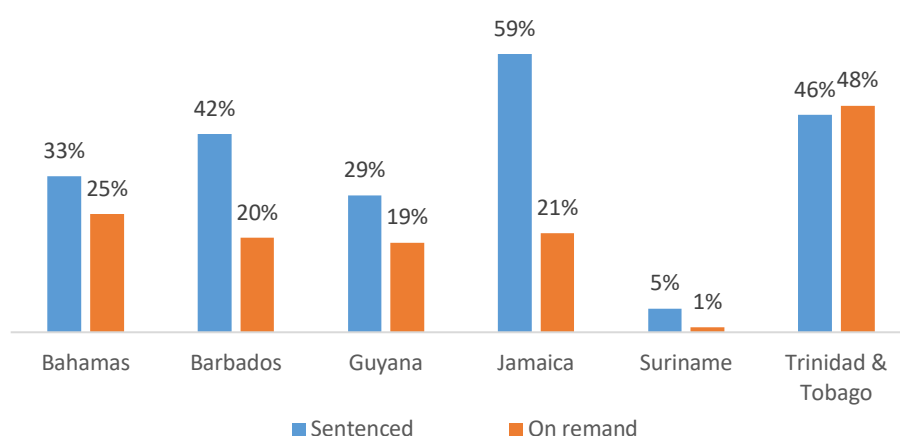
Participating in activities during imprisonment has been shown to favor a successful reintegration process (e.g., reduced criminal recidivism and less difficulty re-entering the labor market) (Inciardi, Martin, Butzin, et al., 1997; Gaes, Flanagan, Motiuk, et al., 1999; Steurer, Smith, and Tracy, 2001; Cullen, 2002). Based on the survey results, the situation in the Caribbean is not very encouraging for individuals in preventative detention. The results show that in all countries individuals on remand were less involved in cleaning and maintenance, labor, and educational (except Trinidad and Tobago) activities compared to sentenced inmates.

The proportion of inmates on remand who did prison cleaning or maintenance ranged from 15 percent in Jamaica to 41 percent in Guyana, while the range for sentenced inmates ranged from 27 percent in Jamaica to 65 percent in Suriname (Figure 119). The greatest difference was in Suriname (sentenced, 65 percent; on remand, 35 percent).

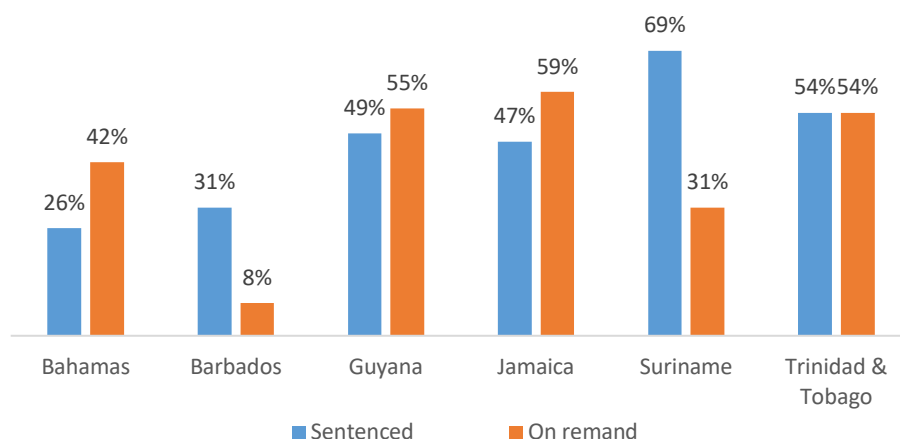
Looking at inmates who worked in prison, again those on remand (from 14 percent in Jamaica to 37 percent in The Bahamas) worked less in prison than those who were already convicted (from 44 percent in Jamaica to 85 percent in Suriname) (Figure 120). The difference was greatest in Suriname (sentenced, 85 percent; on remand, 24 percent), but the trend was the same in all countries. Even in the country with the least pronounced difference (The Bahamas), the discrepancy was 20 percent.

**Figure 118: Did Prison Cleaning or Maintenance****Figure 119: Worked in Prison**

In all countries except Trinidad and Tobago, fewer of the inmates on remand participated in educational activities than those already sentenced, again with very notable differences (Figure 121). The largest difference was in Jamaica, where 59 percent of sentenced inmates studied in prison compared to 21 percent those in pretrial detention. The smallest difference was in Trinidad and Tobago (only 2 percent separating the two groups), which was the only country where more inmates on remand studied than convicts.

**Figure 120: Studied in Prison**

Sporting activities was the only area where there were no clear differences between sentenced inmates and those on remand (Figure 122). In The Bahamas, Guyana, and Jamaica, inmates in pretrial detention participated more in sports; however, in Barbados and Suriname they participated less, and in Trinidad and Tobago there was no difference.

**Figure 121: Participated in Sports Activities**

Generally, the survey data suggests that individuals in pretrial detention are in a more disadvantaged situation while imprisoned compared to sentenced inmates. Inmates on remand experience more overcrowding and higher levels of violence, feel more unsafe, and participate less in activities that would benefit their social reintegration (e.g., work in prison and educational activities).

Since inmates on remand and convicted inmates experience similar difficulties in reintegrating into society on release, those on remand should be accorded the same opportunities as convicts in prison (e.g., education, rehabilitation, and work). Without access to such opportunities, inmates on remand are more likely to reoffend once released. Thus, where prisons fail to provide relevant services to all inmates, they could inadvertently be contributing to the crime problem.

The results of the inmate surveys are consistent with those of the Needs Assessment Reports (IDB, unpublished) that were conducted in Caribbean prisons. Unfortunately, prisons across the region focus their efforts on convicted inmates and neglect those on remand, who are presumed innocent. The assumption is that if they are innocent, they do not need rehabilitation or other services. However, as indicated above, just the fact of being imprisoned creates difficulties (e.g., loss of employment, family disruption, and psychological trauma) that in turn hinder reintegration. Therefore, the population of inmates on remand should not be seen only as people to be housed, but as a population in need of treatment and other relevant services.

## Factors Associated with Recidivism

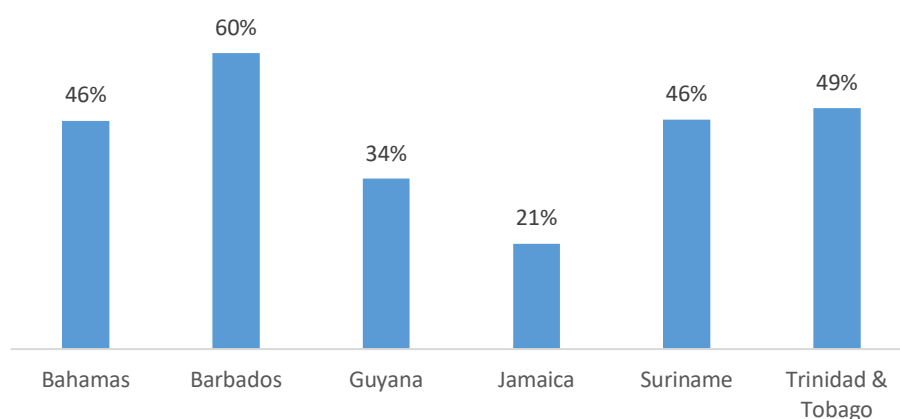
Recidivism rates are often considered an important indicator of prison performance. Where recidivism rates are high, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts are seen to have failed and imprisonment has had no deterrent effect on inmates. Having said this, there are many controversies regarding how recidivism is measured, and changing recidivism is operationalized can change the findings. For example, if the time elapsed before committing other offenses is increased or if the range of crimes considered is increased, then recidivism rate will also increase. Likewise, if recidivism is measured as re-arrest versus re-conviction, then very different findings are obtained.

Also, recidivism should be only one among several indicators of prison performance. For example, overcrowding, access to health and dental care, levels of prison violence, prison management, accountability, and transparency, can be variables in assessing prison performance.

Still, examining recidivism rates and factors that may affect recidivism provides important insight into prison performance in the Caribbean and suggests areas of focus to reduce reoffending. Accordingly, this section of the report starts by looking at recidivism rates measured by self-reported data from the inmate surveys and then examines a range of potential risk factors contributing to reoffending. Factors include sociodemographic characteristics (having children, level of education, and drug use) and sociocultural considerations (childhood physical abuse, domestic violence in the childhood home, parental drug use, leaving home at an early age, and criminal gangs in childhood neighborhood). The findings on risk factors should be considered provisional as they are based on descriptive statistical analyses.

Data on recidivism rates, understood in this report as re-imprisonment of individuals who had previously been imprisoned for another crime, are shown in the Figure 123. The results range from 60 percent in Barbados to 21 percent in Jamaica, which suggests that a large proportion of inmates are unable to reintegrate successfully once they are released, potentially leading to higher rates of criminal activity and higher costs to governments (Petersilia, 2003). Therefore, it is important to determine which factors are related to recidivism in the Caribbean. Here we examine sociodemographic factors, drug use, and childhood socialization.

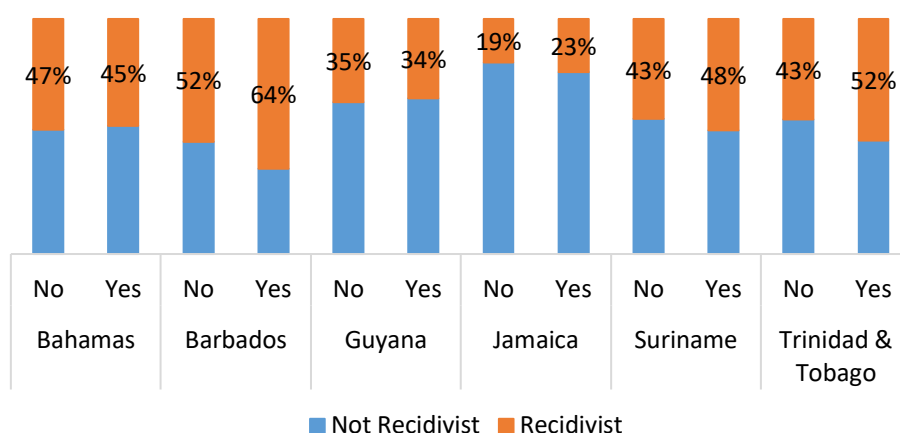
**Figure 122: Previously Incarcerated for Another Crime**



### Sociodemographic Characteristics

The findings of this study suggest a link between *having children* and being a repeat offender (Figure 124). In Barbados, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, inmates who had children were more likely to be repeat offenders than those without children. For example, in Barbados 64 percent of people who had children had been to prison before compared to 52 percent of those without children. However, the opposite trend was observed in The Bahamas and Guyana, although in these countries the differences were small (1 percent to 2 percent). Interestingly, the results show that having children at a young age (before the age of 18) was not related to recidivism.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 123: Has Children and Recidivism**

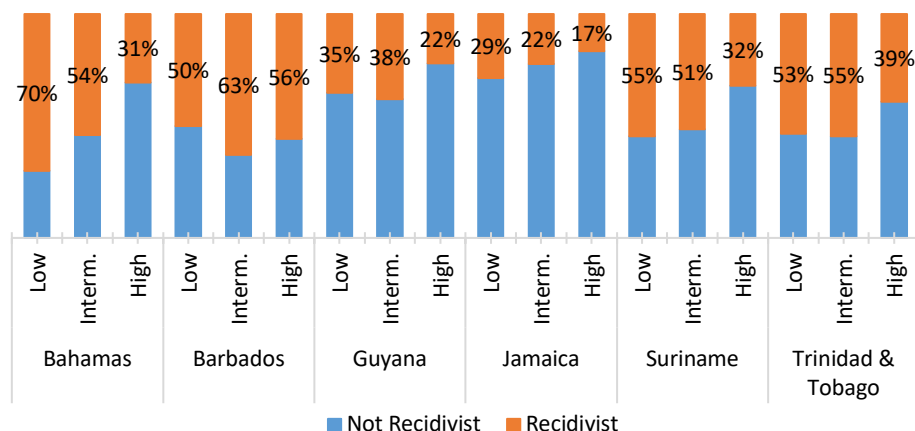


The data also suggest an association between education and recidivism (Figure 125).<sup>25</sup> In all countries except Barbados, people with higher educational levels<sup>26</sup> showed lower levels of recidivism than those with low and intermediate educational levels. For example, in The Bahamas 70 percent of people with low educational levels had previously been in prison compared to 31 percent of those with a high level of education. This finding highlights the role of education as a key tool for reducing recidivism and, consequently, crime rates. Barbados is the only country where the findings are not consistent with this pattern, with the lowest recidivism rates found among people with a low educational level.

<sup>24</sup> See test results of statistical significance in the Appendix.

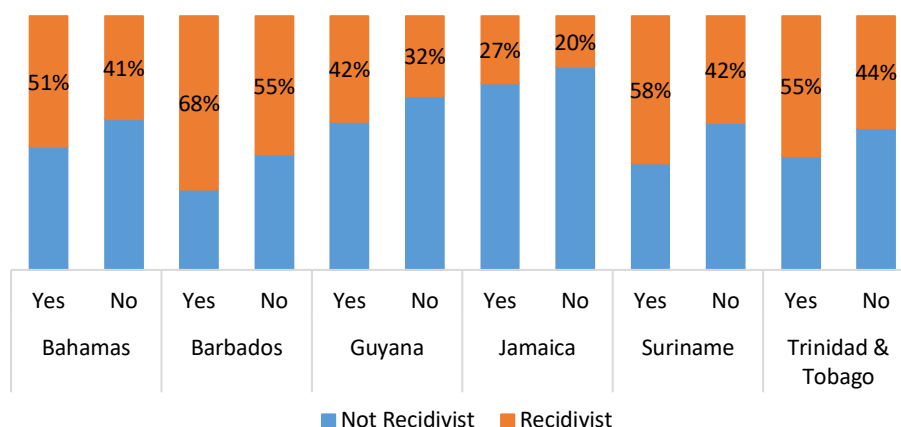
<sup>25</sup> See test results of statistical significance in the Appendix.

<sup>26</sup> Low educational level = complete primary education; intermediate educational level = incomplete secondary education; high educational level = complete secondary education or more.

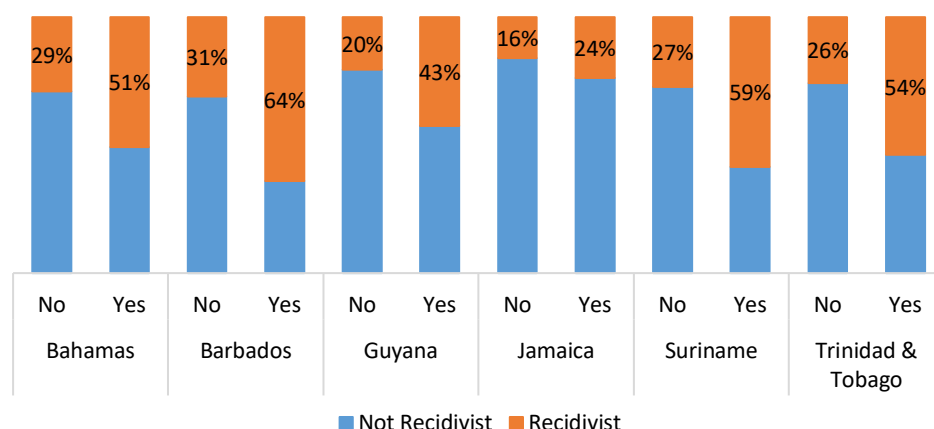
**Figure 124: Education and Recidivism**

### Drug Use

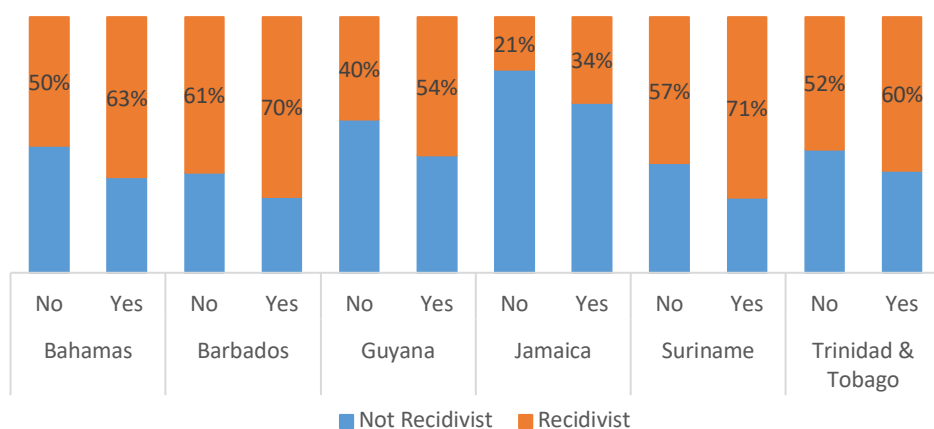
The results suggest that there is a link between alcohol or drug use and recidivism (Figure 126). In all countries, inmates who used drugs and/or alcohol before committing their crime were more likely to be recidivists than those who did not. For example, in Suriname, 58 percent of inmates who used drugs or alcohol before their crime were repeat offenders compared to only 42 percent of those who did not.

**Figure 125: Used Alcohol/Drugs within 6 Hours of Crime and Recidivism**

Another indicator was whether inmates had used drugs during their lifetime since the data suggest that drug use is associated with recidivism (Figure 127). For example, in The Bahamas among those who used drugs, 51 percent were recidivists compared to 29 percent of inmates who did not use drugs. This trend was observed in all countries, with the disparity in recidivism rates between drug users and non-drug users being quite large in some cases.

**Figure 126: Inmate Tried at Least One Drug and Recidivism**

Drug use at an early age (before 12 years) was a third indicator, and these results also suggest an association between drug use and recidivism, with those who began using drugs at an early age being more likely to be recidivists than those who did not (Figure 128). For example, in The Bahamas, 63 percent of the inmates who began using drugs at an early age were recidivists compared to 50 percent who did not use drugs early. This pattern was the same in all countries.

**Figure 127: Inmate Tried at Least One Drug by Age 12 and Recidivism**

The results for all three indicators of drug use suggest that it is associated with higher rates of recidivism.

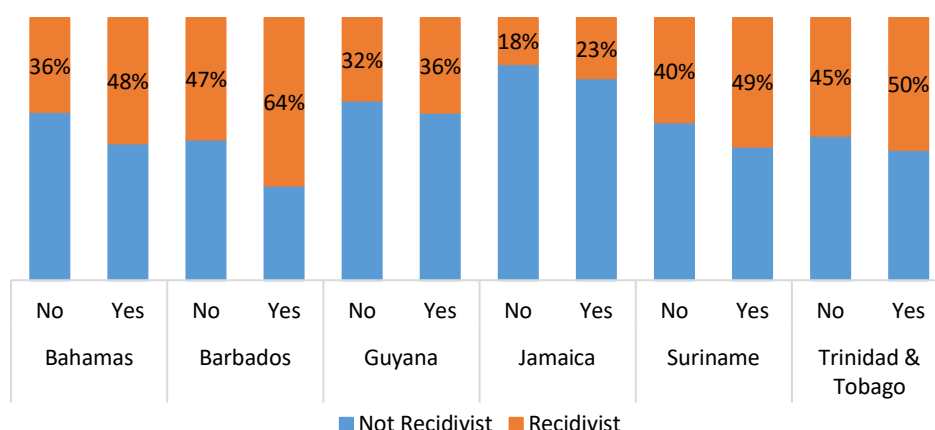
### Socialization

The results presented in this section suggest that growing up in an unfavorable family environment increases the likelihood of recidivism. Inmates who had lived with family violence (experienced and witnessed), drug use by someone in their family, leaving home at an early age, and criminal gangs in their neighborhood, were more likely to be recidivists. There were very few exceptions to these findings across the range of countries studied.



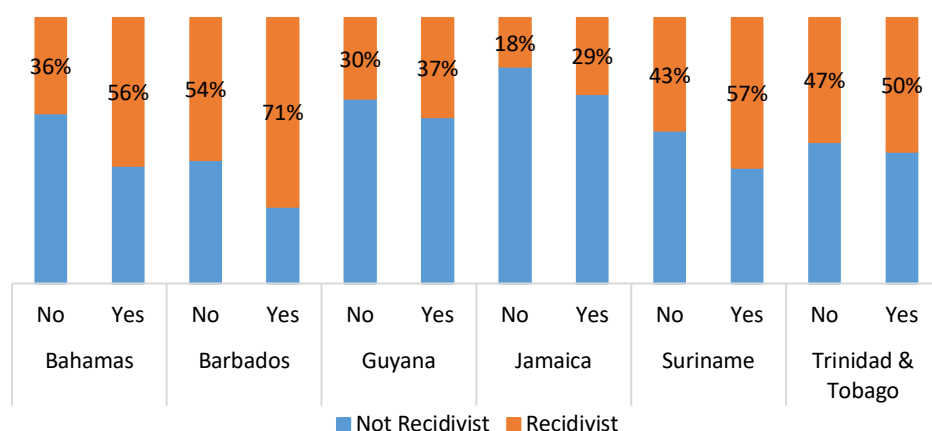
The correlation between physical punishment in childhood and recidivism rates was examined. The results show that inmates who were physically punished as children were more likely to recidivate than inmates who were not (Figure 129). This trend applied to all countries, with the most pronounced effects in The Bahamas, Barbados and Suriname. For example, in The Bahamas, 48 percent of the inmates who were physically punished as a child were recidivists compared to 36 percent who were not punished as a child. In Barbados, 64 percent of those who were punished were recidivists compared to 47 percent of those not punished. In Suriname, 49 percent of those who were punished were recidivists compared to 40 percent of those not punished.

**Figure 128: Physically Punished as Child and Recidivism**



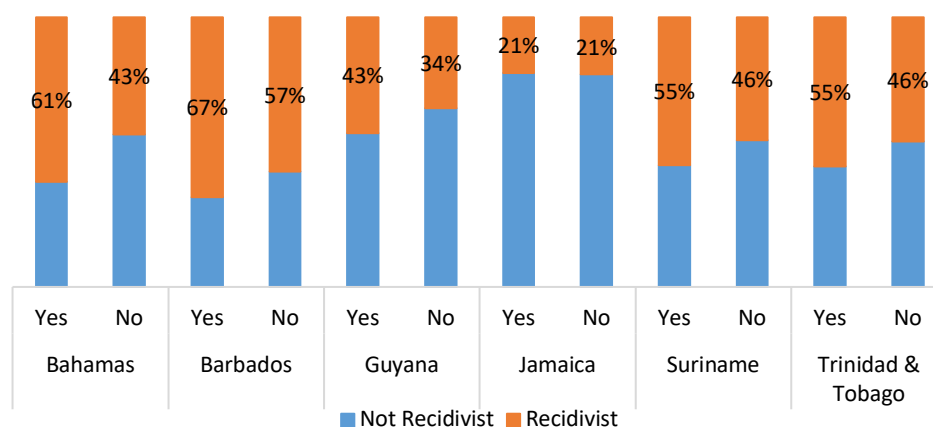
Physical violence between parents in the home was also a risk factor that stood out. The results show that inmates who grew up in homes where their fathers beat their mothers were more likely to be repeat offenders than inmates who grew up in homes where physical violence between parents did not occur (Figure 130). This finding applied to all countries, with very pronounced differences noted in The Bahamas, Barbados, and Suriname. In Suriname, for example, the results show that, of those who grew up in households with intimate partner violence, 57 percent were recidivists compared to only 43 percent of the inmates who grew up in households without such violence.

**Figure 129: Inmates' Mother Beaten by Father or Partner and Recidivism**



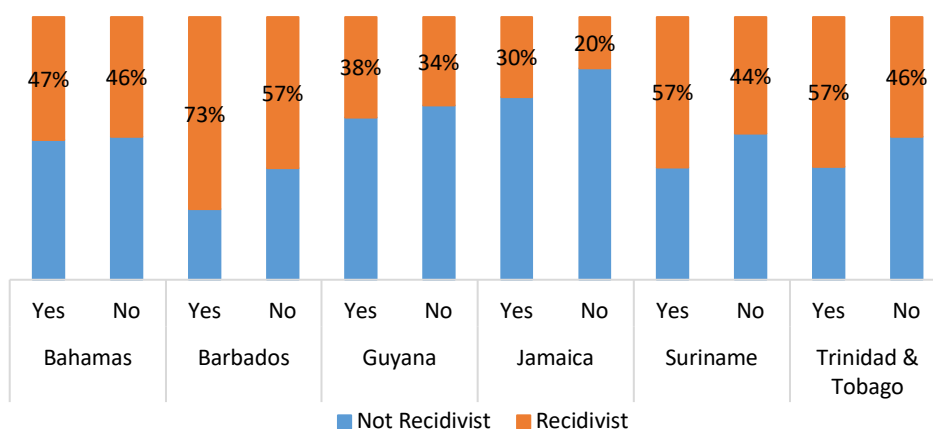
Drug use by parents or guardians was related to recidivism in all countries except Jamaica (Figure 131). In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, of those who grew up in households where their parents or guardians used drugs, 55 percent were recidivists compared to 46 percent of those who grew up in households where illegal substances were not used. In Barbados, 67 percent of inmates who grew up in homes where drugs were used were recidivists compared to 57 percent of those who grew up in homes where drugs were not used. In Jamaica, in contrast, 21 percent of both groups were recidivists.

**Figure 130: Parents or Guardian Used Drugs and Recidivism**



The results suggest that leaving home at an early age is related to recidivism. This applied in all countries except The Bahamas (Figure 132). For example, of those who left home before the age of 15 in Barbados, 73 percent were recidivists compared to 57 percent of those who did not leave home early. Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, 57 percent of those who left home at an early age were recidivists compared to 46 percent of those who did not leave home early. In contrast, in The Bahamas, of those who left home at an early age, 47 percent were recidivists compared to 46 percent of those who did not leave home early.

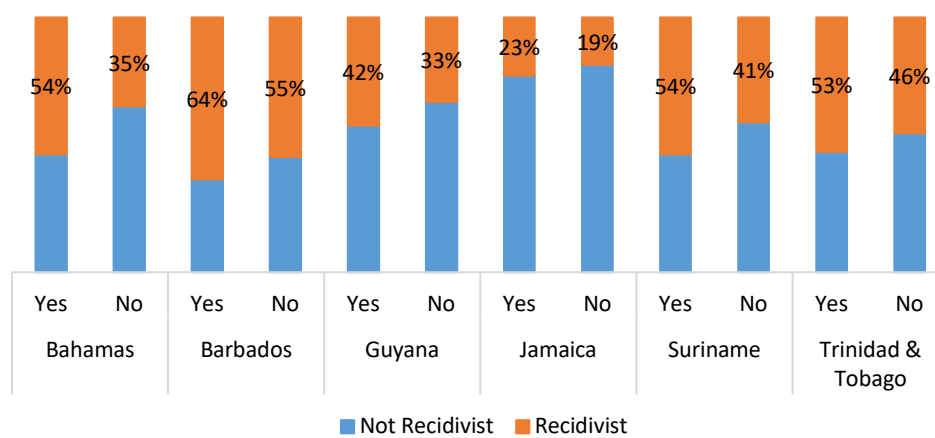
**Figure 131: Left Home Before Age 15 and Recidivism**



In all countries, the results show that inmates who resided in neighborhoods with criminal gangs were more likely to be recidivists than inmates who resided in neighborhoods without gangs (Figure 133). For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, 53 percent of inmates who grew up in neighborhoods with gangs were recidivists compared to 46 percent of those who resided in neighborhoods without gangs. Similarly, in Suriname 54 percent of inmates who grew up in neighborhoods with gangs were recidivists compared to 41 percent of those who resided in neighborhoods without gangs.

However, based on the inmates' responses, being a member of a gang or not does not predict recidivism.

**Figure 132: Gangs/Criminal Groups in Neighborhood and Recidivism**



In summary, the results in this section suggest that several factors increase the likelihood that inmates will be repeat offenders, including:

- having children,
- low educational attainment,
- drug use (personal use and growing up in a family where other family members used drugs),
- family violence (physically punished as a child and witnessing violence against mother),
- leaving home at an early age,
- and residing in neighborhoods with criminal gangs.

## Conclusions and Recommendations:

### Pathways to More Humane Prisons in the Caribbean

This section summarizes the main findings of the survey and presents a series of recommendations for new directions in prison reform. It is difficult to imagine a humane or peaceful prison, but the information gathered in this report allow us to put forward concrete actions to rethink prisons in the Caribbean. It is possible for prisons to accomplish their goals more constructively and contribute to safer societies. This report fills an important knowledge gap in understanding the dynamics of Caribbean prisons. It is one of the most ambitious projects, collecting data inside Caribbean prisons. It is also the first cross-country comparative analysis of prison conditions and life in prison in the Caribbean that aims to produce culturally relevant findings. This report is an original contribution to policymaking that amplifies the voices of incarcerated individuals, who are often neglected in policy decisions, and offers a robust diagnosis of the problems and challenges faced by incarcerated individuals and prison managers. It seeks to contribute to better-informed decision-making processes in the region.

### Pathways into Crime and Violence

A key finding of the study focused on the environment in which inmates were socialized and its implications for their criminal paths. Inmates who grew up in deprived settings—characterized by family violence, drug and alcohol abuse by parents or caregivers, incarceration of family members, early separation from their household, and criminal gangs in the neighborhood—were more likely to commit a crime and showed higher levels of recidivism. These risk factors were found consistently among the six countries studied, suggesting that they should be a focus of social prevention policies within Caribbean countries. It is essential that interventions strengthen family bonds; target parenting skills and childrearing practices; create family-centered programs for incarcerated parents, their children, and families; and develop childhood policies designed to intervene at early stages. The importance of preventative interventions—as opposed to crime suppression—cannot be emphasized enough, especially in the Caribbean. Some Caribbean governments have a long history of favoring punitive strategies based on crime suppression, and in so doing, preventative approaches are usually neglected. The populations of the Caribbean have expressed strong willingness to support preventative interventions in the fight against crime (UNDP, 2012). Caribbean governments, therefore, should move away from decisions based on what they believe to be popular (i.e., crime suppression and tough on crime policies) and should strongly consider more comprehensive public safety strategies that balance prevention and control and incorporate the wealth of empirical evidence that is available.

The findings from this study also suggest that substance use is a key area of intervention for correctional policies. As indicated in the section on factors associated with recidivism, in all of the countries studied, inmates who used drugs and/or alcohol before committing their crime showed higher levels of recidivism than those who did not consume such substances. In addition, high levels of drug use was observed in the Caribbean prisons and, importantly, the results showed that the majority of drugs are brought in by prison staff. According to international literature, individuals who have substance abuse issues when incarcerated and have access to treatment programs during custody show lower levels of drug use after leaving prison (La Vigne and Kachnowski, 2005; La Vigne et al., 2004; Visser, Baer, and Naser, 2006; Visser and

Courtney, 2006). Since drug use is a risk factor for criminal recidivism, extending participation in substance use treatment programs during and after incarceration, is a recommendation that emerges from the results of this study and the evidence accumulated internationally. Extending the results of this study to the wider society suggests that drug use may be related to criminal offending in general. Therefore, the drug issue needs to be taken seriously. At the societal level, both supply of and demand for drugs need to be emphasized. With several Caribbean countries considering the decriminalization of marijuana, and several countries already having taken this step, it remains to be seen whether it will translate into higher rates of criminal offending. However, within the confines of this study, the implications are clear—effective drug treatment within prisons is essential.

While there is no single formula to effectively manage prisons and prisoners, the broad recommendations presented in this section attempt to offer directions to Caribbean governments as they embark on transforming their prisons into more humane spaces for those living and working in them. As mentioned above, it is clear that the overuse of incarceration does not make Caribbean communities any safer. Rather, findings and recommendations from this report corroborate prior research on the key role correctional institutions in preventing crime and violence. We hope that findings of this project provide Caribbean governments with a more complete picture of who the individuals behind bars are, what their daily life looks like, and what their fears are for when they return to the community. Finally, we hope that this report encourages Caribbean researchers to undertake new avenues of inquiry and develop innovative approaches to study prison settings.

Based on the findings described above and the review of the international evidence, the following key final recommendations are intended to inform decision making and prison policymaking processes. They are grouped by the thematic areas addressed in this report.

### Protecting Due Process and the Rule of Law

This study allowed for a better understanding of the perceptions of detainees about their legal proceedings. Results found that a high proportion of inmates (e.g., 28 percent in Barbados and 49 percent in Jamaica) had no understanding of what happened during their legal proceedings. The lack of understanding of the judicial process deepens the vulnerability and powerlessness of inmates. Therefore, concrete efforts should be made to ensure that those who go through judicial processes understand the fundamental characteristics of the mechanisms to which they are subjected. Although the present study did not collect data in relation to the language spoken by the populations surveyed, Caribbean countries are characterized by their multilingualism.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, it is possible that the native languages spoken by some of the inmates is not the same as that used by the courts during judicial proceedings, which could affect how

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<sup>27</sup> In Suriname, Sranan is a predominant language along with Dutch. In Guyana, in addition to English, Guyana Creole, Akawaio, and other languages are spoken. In Jamaica, English and Creole are predominant. In The Bahamas, the most spoken languages are English, Bahamian Creole, and Haitian Creole. In Barbados, the predominant languages are English and Barbadian Creole. In Trinidad and Tobago, in addition to English, people speak Trinidadian Creole English, Tobagonian Creole English, Trinidadian Hindustani, among others.

well an inmate understands the processes and could even put people from specific communities at a disadvantage within the judicial system. A large proportion of inmates come from depressed neighborhoods, which may be the same neighborhoods where the official language is not used as commonly.<sup>28</sup> Language needs to be explored further to assess whether it hinders understanding of judicial and other criminal justice processes, thus generating inequities for some populations.

This study discovered a particularly unfavorable situation regarding access to adequate legal defense. Between 38 percent of inmates (in Guyana) and 17 percent (in Trinidad and Tobago) did not have a lawyer even though it is a right enshrined in the constitutions of all six countries examined. It is worrying that in some countries access to legal representation for individuals who cannot afford it depends on the services of legal advice clinics that are established by civil organizations, which typically do not have the resources necessary to reach all people who need them. Based on these findings, it is essential that authorities invest in strengthening access to legal counsel to guarantee that every inmate has legal representation. A lack of adequate legal representation hinders procedural fairness and contributes to the miscarriage of justice. Failure to provide adequate legal representation implies that the rights of the defendants may be infringed.

The time elapsed between arrest and sentencing is worrying. In three of the six countries examined (The Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica), 40 percent or more of the prison population indicated that more than 18 months had elapsed between their arrest and sentencing. Therefore, it is necessary to accelerate legal processes, especially in these three countries, to reduce the time that innocent people may be incarcerated, and to reduce prison costs and overcrowding. Reducing the time that innocent people spend in prison will also minimize the harm done to them and their families, potentially reducing the likelihood that they resort to criminal offending to survive (e.g., due to job loss).

### Improving Living Conditions

The evidence regarding the frequency with which inmates receive visits also has important implications for correctional services in the Caribbean. In all countries studied, a notable proportion of the prison population was not visited by anyone or received very infrequent visits (between one and three times a year), with the extreme cases being Guyana (50 percent) and Suriname (21 percent). The fact that a substantial number of inmates have no or barely no face-to-face contact people significant in their life during imprisonment has important implications for rehabilitation. International literature indicates that preserving ties during imprisonment contributes to better mental health for inmates and their families (Flanagan, 1981; Fox, 1982; Richards, 1978) and reduces recidivism (La Vigne, Naser, Brooks, et al., 2005; Bales and Mears, 2008; Mears, Cochran, Siennick, et al., 2012; Duwe and Clark, 2013; Cochran, 2014). Contact with families improves family ties and increases the chances of family reunification once inmates leave prison (Naser and La Vigne, 2006; Rocque, Bierie, Posick, et al., 2013). Therefore, correctional policies in Caribbean countries should encourage visits and put mechanisms in place to identify inmates who are not visited frequently, taking steps to increase the frequency of visits. Such measures could include providing

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<sup>28</sup> While only Guyana and Suriname are formally multilingual countries, the dialect used in many Caribbean neighborhoods (especially rural and depressed neighborhoods) differs from the standard English used in the courts. This is further complicated by legal terms and jargon that many people find confusing. Further, low educational levels may be part of the lack of understanding of the language used in courts.

transportation to the prisons on specific days, especially in countries where prisons are located in remote or difficult to access areas. Open days could also be used to encourage relatives to visit. Special effort could be made to contact the relatives of inmates and invite them to visit. In the long run, investments that build the relationship between the prison population and the people in their lives helps to provide a support network during imprisonment, improve the chances of successful reintegration, and reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

Other findings with important correctional implications are related to victimization in Caribbean prisons. Between 16 percent and 26 percent of the individuals surveyed in the six countries examined indicated that they were attacked or beaten within the previous six months, and from 72 percent to 89 percent had witnessed other inmates being beaten or attacked. The results also show that between 3 percent and 12 percent of inmates had witnessed the sexual victimization of other inmates. These high levels of physical and sexual violence deserve the attention and resources of correctional authorities, and changes should be based on evidence accumulated internationally regarding preventing prison violence and intervention strategies to reduce these incidents (Cooke, Wozniak, and Johnstone, 2008). Introducing systematic evidence-based strategies is key to promoting environments in which inmates' right to safety is guaranteed. While the findings from this study cannot be used to determine which strategies might be successful in Caribbean prisons, the following references provide information on evidence-based strategies: Binda (1975); Farrington and Nuttall (1980); Hensley, Koscheski, and Tewksbury (2002); Matthews and Pitts (1998); Singer and Keating (1973); D'Alessio, Flexon, and Stolzenberg (2013); and Wooldredge and Steiner (2009).

### Preparing Prisoners for Release: Education and Employment

The survey yielded results related to the work trajectories of inmates in terms of their work experiences during imprisonment and after their release. Incarcerated individuals in the six countries studied have limited access to work-related programs in prison. For instance, the highest proportion of inmates that were working was 57 percent in The Bahamas. International research has found that employment programs during incarceration, including work in prison, educational and vocational training programs that aim to equip inmates with useful credentials, and programs that prepare inmates for job searches outside of prison, are associated with higher levels of employment after release. They are also associated with lower recidivism rates (Bouffard, MacKenzie, and Hickman, 2000; La Vigne et al., 2009; Visser et al., 2004). Therefore, extending access to education and work opportunities in Caribbean prisons will contribute to better use of incarceration time and will increase the likelihood of successful reintegration once inmates are released.

In addition, results show that among inmates working in Caribbean prisons—between 33 percent in Barbados and 57 percent in The Bahamas—there is great variability between countries in terms of whether their work is paid—83 percent of inmates who work in Suriname prisons are paid compared to only 13 percent in Trinidad and Tobago. The inability to make money places additional strain on inmates' families and precludes any savings during incarceration. As such, compensation for prison work could ease some of the financial burden on the families of prisoners, who may already be suffering lost income due to the imprisonment of household providers. This is particularly relevant for female inmates, who in many

cases are the only providers for their homes and for whom incarceration can have an extremely strong impact on their families. This is especially salient in the Caribbean, where single-parent female-headed households is a widespread phenomenon (Barriteau, 2003). In addition, being able to work and save adds purpose to the lives of inmates and has the added benefit of reducing idle time. Earning and saving also has a positive psychological impact since it can serve to improve inmates' sense of self-worth. More importantly, having money available on release assists with the reintegration process, thereby reducing recidivism (Jensen and Reed, 2006; MacKenzie, 2006).

Participation in educational programming during incarceration can improve reintegration. However, rates were quite low, ranging from only 3 percent in Suriname to 49 percent in Jamaica. Importantly, this study also shows that low educational attainment is related to higher levels of criminal recidivism.<sup>29</sup> This is consistent with the findings of international literature, which indicates that inmates participating in educational programs are more likely to find employment and exhibit lower levels of recidivism once they leave prison (Aós et al., 2006; Davis, Bozick, Steele, et al., 2013; Ellison, Szifris, Horan, et al., 2017; Jensen and Reed, 2006; MacKenzie, 2006). We highlight the findings of Bozick, Steele, Davis, et al. (2018), who examined 37 years' worth of administrative data and found that, while education in prison reduced recidivism, people who were released still had trouble finding jobs. Thus it is necessary to extend educational programs to reach a larger population and to increase credentials and employability. The limited educational activity observed through the inmate survey suggests urgent attention is required since time in prison can be an opportunity to increase the human capital of those who are incarcerated. The results underscore the role that the prisons serve in reducing crime at the national level in Caribbean countries.

In addition, inmates in the Caribbean usually had unemployment levels higher than the general population in their countries, indicating limited access to the labor market. The period of imprisonment could be an opportunity to increase their labor credentials and thus their employability on release. The fact that the greatest challenge faced by inmates after their last release from prison was finding employment reveals the need to develop a comprehensive strategy that facilitates successful reintegration. The findings of Bozick et al. (2018) suggest that it is important to put measures in place to reduce the stigma attached to being imprisoned so that employers in Caribbean countries become more willing to hire people who have been released. Without a change in attitude in the wider society, improving inmates' qualifications will not necessarily translate into increased employment rates.

Therefore, reentry strategies should focus on:

- increasing the labor skills of inmates during imprisonment,
- generating incentives for employers to hire formerly incarcerated individuals,
- ensuring social and health services are in place to support individual change and transformation, and
- implementing public education and outreach programs to change attitudes and assumptions about prisoners, reducing prejudices and stigma.

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<sup>29</sup> See test results of statistical significance in the Appendix.



Governments should also consider the “ban the box” strategy, which requires employers to eliminate the question on job applications about an applicant's criminal history and attempts to reduce employers' accessibility to criminal records.

In addition to education and employment opportunities in prison, another important element of preparing inmates for release is access to and participation in reentry or pre-release programs. The survey findings are discouraging, with between 6 percent (in Suriname) and 14 percent (in Trinidad and Tobago) of inmates accessing such services. International research has shown that pre-release support is critical to success post-release because it can identify needs and strengths and help establish long-term goals (Kendall, Redshaw, Ward, et al., 2018). Moreover, participation in reentry programs is associated with lower levels of recidivism and higher levels of employment after release from prison (Visser, Kachnowski, La Vigne, et al., 2004). These results suggest the quality and availability of pre-release services offered in the Caribbean region need to be evaluated.

While pre-release services are important, post-release services are even more critical. Evidence accumulated internationally indicates that support after imprisonment is a key factor for successful reintegration. Reentry support programs dedicated to issues like job search, housing, drug use treatment, mental health, and reintegration into the education system contribute significantly to successful reintegration and reduce recidivism (Anglin et al., 2002; Allard and Danziger, 2003; Brameld and Holman, 2006; Visser and Courtney, 2007; Weiss and Greenlick, 2007; Zhang et al., 2006). Unfortunately, post-release services are almost entirely absent in Caribbean countries. For example, the results of the inmate surveys show that, at only 10 percent of the respondents, Jamaica had the highest proportion of inmates who accessed post-release services. While inmates may feel that they are ready for reintegration, the difficulties they face on release may be insurmountable, potentially leading to reoffending. Post-release services that assist with the reintegration process should be considered an essential part of the services offered by the prisons and other relevant administrative bodies. For example, post-release services could become an extension of parole board services. These services would significantly reduce the likelihood that inmates would reoffend to support themselves once released. Since family support is an important dimension of the reintegration process, post-release services should continue to reinforce the role of family in successful reintegration.

### Ensuring Gender-Responsive Approaches for Women in Prison

The female inmates in the countries studied were primarily low-level offenders mainly incarcerated for drug-related offenses (i.e., drug trafficking and/or possession of drugs), except in The Bahamas and Jamaica, where a larger proportion of the women were imprisoned for more serious crimes, such as robbery. Findings show that in some countries incarcerated women lived in violent homes and suffered physical abuse. They were also more likely to be adolescent mothers and more children on average than male inmates. Combined, these factors result in a higher level of vulnerability in the female prison population. In addition, not only did the women tend to have more children than their male counterparts, they usually lived with their children before incarceration and were their main providers more than men who were fathers. Female inmates were also more likely to have a partner in prison than male inmates, creating further disruption to their families, additional restrictions, and lack of support for dependent children.

The burden of care assumed by women should be recognized by public policymakers in general and prison authorities in particular. Female incarceration frequently means the main provider is being removed from the home. Also, where parents, particularly mothers in female-headed households, are incarcerated, dependent children are more vulnerable and the risk of being victimized increases. Children with an incarcerated parent are also more at risk for criminal involvement, for example through gang recruitment. More importantly, these findings suggest the need to address the specific needs of women through differentiated prison policies and practices that contribute to their rehabilitation and recovery. Such actions would represent an advance in relation to a historical trend described by authors such as Antony (2008) and Lagarde (2003), who argue that historically prison systems of Latin America and the Caribbean have been inspired by androcentric models and have ignored the specific needs of women. International evidence suggests that gender-responsive strategies and practices acknowledge the realities and criminal trajectories of female offenders by selecting staff who are specifically trained to deal with issues that affect women in prison and developing program content and materials that cater to the needs of female inmates. Interventions commonly address issues such as abuse, trauma, family relationships, substance use, and mental health disorders, while enhancing each offender's strengths and life skills (Bloom, Owen, and Covington, 2004; Messina et al., 2019).

### Limiting Pretrial Detention

Although the universal principle of presumption of innocence implies that detaining people before their trials should be rare, this has become a default practice in many Caribbean criminal justice systems.<sup>30</sup> For example, in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname, pretrial detainees outnumbered sentenced inmates. This is a worrisome trend, since pretrial detention contributes to overcrowding in prisons, perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty and imprisonment, and undermines the credibility of the rule of law. Thus, strategies to reduce the use of pretrial detention and increase alternatives to custodial measures should be a priority for Caribbean governments. Strategies could include developing protocols and training for key judicial actors so detention prior to trial is used as a last resort, setting custody limits and tracking periods of detention to reduce the possibility of holding remanded individuals in custody for excessive periods of time, releasing pretrial detainees after the time in custody exceeds those limits, and ensuring that bail amounts are set proportionately to the means of the defendant.

Moreover, survey findings suggest that there are marked inequities between inmates in pretrial detention and convicts. Inmates on remand were found to be housed in worse conditions, to experience higher levels of violence, and to participate less in activities that favor their social reintegration, providing strong evidence that their conditions of imprisonment need to be improved to guarantee their rights and security.<sup>31</sup> In the majority of Caribbean prisons, inmates on remand are housed along with the general population, meaning serious offenders are housed with people still considered innocent. This increases the risk

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<sup>30</sup> The time elapsed between when an inmate was arrested and when they were sentenced differed in each country. The longest period was an average of 27 months (median 15 months) in Jamaica, followed by 23 months on average (median 3) in Trinidad and Tobago, 22 months (median 12) in Barbados and The Bahamas, 18 months (median 4) in Guyana, and 11 months (median 8) in Suriname.

<sup>31</sup> See test results of statistical significance in Appendix.

of victimization of innocent people and provides opportunities to learn norms and values that are conducive to criminal offending.

Therefore, the conditions under which pretrial detainees are housed need to be significantly improved (e.g., better and less crowded housing conditions, access to educational and other opportunities, and segregation of pretrial detainees based on the seriousness of the alleged offense). Further, to minimize the time that inmates on remand are held in custody, measures to speed up court trials and reduce the use of pretrial detention should be put in place.

### Ensuring that Pretrial Detention Is a Last Resort

Caribbean prisons hold a large number of individuals who may have not been found guilty and who wait on average for 16 months for their cases to be resolved. This violates the basic right to be presumed innocent until convicted and contributes to increasing levels of overcrowding, in turn resulting in poor living conditions for and ill-treatment of detainees. In addition, pretrial detainees are often first-time offenders who commit non-violent offenses.

Decreasing the use of pretrial detention reduces prison overcrowding, while at the same time ensuring that prison is reserved for people who pose an imminent risk to public safety, who are persistent offenders, and who commit serious crimes. Developing a strategy to use pretrial detention as a measure of last resort should encourage key judicial actors to use alternatives to detention at the pretrial stage, offer bail amounts according to defendants' ability to pay, ensure access to legal representation, and set custody limits, putting mechanisms in place to track detention to reduce the possibility that inmates on remand are held for excessive periods of time prior to trial. In addition, improving the conditions of custody for remanded inmates should be a priority, including accommodation separate from the general population and access to various services and activities (e.g., educational programs). In most countries inmates on remand reside in extremely poor conditions, do not have access to education, sport, or work-related activities, and are often victims of violence.

### Promoting and Increasing Use of Alternatives to Imprisonment

Imprisonment is extremely expensive, causes a lot of pain and harm to incarcerated individuals, their families, and their communities, and does not effectively reduce reoffending. Therefore, dedicating resources to strengthen existing alternatives and introduce new measures, particularly for non-violent offenders, may be a more effective strategy in dealing with certain criminals. Community-based sanctions could include suspended sentences, probation, electronic monitoring, house arrest, community service, drug-treatment courts, and fines. Using alternative strategies would lower imprisonment rates and reduce the costs of the prison systems (Wodahl and Garland, 2009; Zhang et al., 2006). Additionally, public communication and education strategies should be implemented to change public attitudes that community sanctions are lenient punishment because this perspective could discourage judicial actors from offering alternative measures and undermine governmental efforts to strengthen the availability of alternative sanctions.

## Understanding and Preventing Recidivism

Another important finding of this study was the time between an inmate's release and their re-imprisonment. In most countries, about 40 percent of released offenders were imprisoned again within a year or less after their release. These findings are not surprising since the point of release, and shortly after, is the period when inmates are most vulnerable (Petersilia, 2001). At that point they have limited or no resources but have an immediate need for food, housing, and other necessities. In the absence of legitimate means to obtain such necessities, inmates may resort to any means necessary to survive. Therefore, the year after release from prison is a strategic period for intervention, and correctional policymakers should understand how important it is. Providing support and reintegration services, as discussed above, should be concentrated within this time period, and longer if necessary for inmates who require more time for successful reintegration.

Another key finding was that a large part of the prison population—between 46 percent and 71 percent depending on the country—plan to return to their neighborhood after they leave prison. International research has shown that people who leave prison usually return to a relatively small number of neighborhoods where the geographical proximity of social services (related to employment and housing, among others) and their degree of availability play a central role in transition back into the community and the risk of recidivism (Mellowa, Schlager, and Caplan, 2008). These neighborhoods generally have limited access to such services. For this reason, it is essential that the authorities identify the neighborhoods to which large contingents of people released from correctional centers return and strengthen key reintegration services in those areas. Employment, housing, and drug-treatment services are especially important.

The results also show that a number of factors were related to recidivism, including low educational attainment, drug use (personal use and growing up in a household where other family members used drugs), family violence (experiencing physical punishment and witnessing violence against their mother as a child), leaving home at an early age, and residing in neighborhoods with criminal gangs. These variables should be considered in designing interventions to reduce recidivism.

## Reducing the Prison Population

Five of the six countries studied have high incarceration rates, surpassing the international average of 145 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants (World Prison Brief, 2019). Many of the Caribbean prison facilities are overcrowded, holding more prisoners than what they were designed for and, while occupancy levels vary between countries, some have reached levels that can be described as inhumane or degrading. Overcrowding and poor prison conditions represent a contravention of basic human rights. Two of the most common approaches to dealing with overcrowding are increasing the capacity of the prison system or reducing the number of prisoners. The first option is expensive, requires a high level of financial investment, and does not produce long-term change in overcrowding because new prisons fill up quickly. Reducing the prison population by introducing changes to criminal procedures and pretrial and sentencing policies is a more effective mechanism.

There are several ways in which the prison population can be reduced: lessening the time spent in pretrial detention and using imprisonment only for the most serious offenses by diverting people who have committed non-serious offenses or who do not pose a threat to the public out of the prison system and into some form of alternative punishment or treatment. Given that drug offenses account for a notable proportion of offenders, people convicted of crimes related to drug use should be diverted to treatment. Strong consideration should also be given to probation and parole, and to releasing aged prisoners who no longer pose a threat to the public.

### Strengthening the Performance of the Criminal Justice System

There is urgent need to improve due process of law, particularly access to legal representation. Most people who are arrested are poor and cannot access private defense, while, in many cases, public legal support is extremely poor and not broadly available. Governments should strongly consider implementing measures to speed up legal procedures. The inmate surveys in The Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica found that more than 18 months had elapsed between arrest and sentencing for 40 percent or more of their prison populations. Although there are no strict standards, most countries have guidelines and statutes of limitations for at least some types of crimes, such as adjudication in less than 12 months for robberies and minor drug felonies and less than 2 years for serious crimes. Complex and organized crimes may take longer, but they are not common. New information and communication technologies could potentially increase the efficiency of court cases, improving recording and scheduling processes. In addition, strengthening the provision of legal services and ensuring that public defender systems have the necessary means to provide quality representation can increase fairness. Lastly, introducing complementary approaches to deal with crime, such as restorative justice practices, can improve both efficiency and fairness, while improving client satisfaction.

### Strengthening and Expanding Evidence-Based Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs

Embracing the philosophy that reentry starts the first day of incarceration can help prison authorities better prepare individuals to transition to a life free of crime. There are three key elements to this approach:

1. assessing offenders' risks of recidivism (e.g., criminal history, prior offenses, and age at first offense)
2. targeting individual offenders' needs (e.g., substance abuse, antisocial personality, criminal thinking, and education and work status) through evidence-based programming
3. delivering treatment in a way that maximizes the offender's ability to learn.

With this approach, correctional systems can ensure that incarcerated individuals receive appropriate services and can monitor their progress. Providing access to rehabilitation programs also reduces idle time inside the prison and can contribute to safety.

Prison rehabilitation programs focusing on education, vocational training, employment preparation, cognitive behavioral therapy, and substance use disorder treatment should be prioritized. Addressing cognitive and individual change should come before practical services. Offenders will be more prepared to take advantage of practical services, such as education or employment, once they have made cognitive changes. Correctional systems should work collaboratively with other government agencies (e.g., Ministry

of Education and Health) and other organizations (e.g., universities, NGOs, and private sector agencies) in providing such services as offenders move through the criminal justice system (i.e., pretrial, incarceration, and reentry).

Other important partners in ensuring successful reintegration are the families and friends of inmates. Based on findings from the surveys and other literature, which show that offenders who have strong family bonds during and after incarceration are more likely to desist from crime, prisons should proactively help maintain family ties. Thus it is important to adopt visitation policies that encourage in-person visits and create a welcoming and comfortable environment for friends and relatives by providing spaces where friends and families can interact with inmates.

Paid employment while in prison needs to be increased drastically. Joint ventures with companies and other strategies should be developed. The ability to save and to develop job-related skills are critical for successful reintegration into society.

The importance of educational programs must be recognized and all inmates, including pretrial detainees, should have access to such programs. Education and training programs should focus on improving basic skills, as well as problem solving capacities, and should aim to certify individuals on successful completion. Such programs should also focus on anger management.

There is very limited access to treatment for drug addiction within prisons in the Caribbean. Addiction to drugs and alcohol is a serious impediment for successful reentry.

Governments should develop agencies that can help inmates once they are released from prison. Inmates require assistance in three critical areas: access to jobs, social assistance for family reunification, and drug addiction. Reentry is a very difficult process, and the surveys demonstrate that there is almost no support, which leads to high rates of recidivism, often very soon after leaving prison.

Countries of the region should develop strong parole-type systems whereby inmates can benefit from early release while they receive legal supervision by parole and judicial agencies. The first six month after release is critical, and providing formal supervision is important in making a successful transition to life in society (Zhang et al., 2006; Paparozzi and Guy, 2009).

The data indicate that individuals released at a young age (less than 30 years) have higher rates of recidivism; therefore, it is important to help and monitor young inmates after they are released.

Violence is high in most prisons, with many inmates having either been victimized or witnessed others being victimized. The results also show that the rates of sexual violence in prisons in the Caribbean are higher than in Latin American prisons (Bergman and Fondevila, forthcoming). Overcrowding and idleness are two important predictors of violence, thus taking measures to reduce them can help reduce violence.

Other broader concerns that are important to consider include developing programs to address the needs of vulnerable populations (e.g., women and children), increasing funding for prisons, providing ongoing training for prison staff (e.g., to reduce physical force against prisoners and to stop them from bringing

illegal substances into the prisons), and changing attitudes and misconceptions about prisons and prisoners (this applies to both prison staff and the public). Addressing these concerns will improve the administration of prisons and improve public safety in the Caribbean.

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## Appendix: Methodology

This appendix contains a brief description of some technical aspects of the survey of inmates made in four Caribbean countries (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Barbados). The following section describes the design of the surveys, with emphasis on the samples, their execution, and the validation procedure.

### Design: Instruments and Samples

#### Instrument Design

The instrument applied was developed by a team of researchers from the CELIV in the National University of Tres de Febrero (UNTREF) in Argentina based on similar surveys that were conducted by the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica (CIDE) researchers in Mexico in 2002, 2005, and 2009 and that were applied between 2013 and 2017 in detention centers in eight Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru). These initial surveys were inspired by inmate surveys that were conducted approximately every six years in the United States by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The instrument developed by the CELIV was then adapted for use in the Caribbean.

The instrument consists of approximately 270 questions that represent approximately 460 variables. The instrument was initially pilot tested in each country and then adjusted to the language and jargon commonly used in each (for each country it was translated into English and in Suriname it was translated into the local dialect and Dutch). Despite minor phrasing changes, the questions were similar in all cases.

#### Samples: Designs and Representativeness

Both inmates on remand and convicted inmates were surveyed, allowing for an examination of differences between them (e.g., living conditions in prison, family relationships, and due process).

In each country, the sample was nationally representative because the samples accounted for all prisons within each prison system. The samples were representative of judicial status (on remand vs. sentenced and appellant) and gender (male vs. female), with quotas for each strata. Representativeness is given by the proportionality of the sample, where each prison unit population is represented accordingly in the total weight of the prison system, apportioning each unit proportionally in the sample size. This mix between proportionality and quotas allows for adequate representation by type of prisons, procedural status and female inmates. Prisons of closed regimes and some semi-open prisons, if any, were also considered.

The interviewees were selected under a strict selection protocol that ensured the randomness of the selection and compliance with the quotas by prison unit. A random list of replacements was made in case the respondent was not present at the time of the interview or rejected it. Although the data by country varied, in no case did rejection rates exceed 30 percent of the respondents.

### General Procedure

The same sample design and selection criteria were used for all four countries, including a series of steps:

1. Review of previous surveys (if any) and the operational and budgetary capacities of the local team.
2. Find the census/population of the prison population in each prison unit, segmented by gender and procedural situation, provided by the prison authority of each country.
3. Determine which prisons would be sampled according to the proportionality of survey sample. For the male population of inmates, all the centers were considered in the sample. If for some reason smaller population centers with specific characteristics (concentration of one type of crime) were necessary, they were included. In the case of female prisoners, the surveys were conducted in all-female centers since the female population of each country was collected in full. In the analysis of the data the relative weight of each case was adjusted through the gender weighting factor derived from the population data.
4. On the first day of fieldwork in each prison facility, a list of inmates ordered alphabetically or by date of admission was requested. Depending on the quota allocated to each center, the cases were randomly selected, and, with similar criteria, a list of replacements was prepared.
5. Once the cases were selected, the security guards were asked to find the inmates and move them to a relatively comfortable place (e.g., a church or classroom). Those who accepted with informed consent were surveyed.
6. On average, in each country, the field operation lasted between 3 and 4 weeks; approximately 2 days were spent per prison unit.
7. Statistical criteria used in all samples were: 95 percent confidence; 3.5 percent margin of error; theoretical maximum variability of 50 percent.

### Samples by Country

**Table 39: Barbados**

Her Majesty's Prison (Dodds)	On Remand			Sentenced			Grand Total
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	
Census	452	9	461	361	8	369	830
Sample	216	9	225	173	8	181	406

Given the size of the prison population in Barbados on the date of the survey (830 inmates), to meet the common statistical criteria, the sample size was almost half of the male population and included all of the women. Inmates who were already sentenced (some were appealing) represented 44.6 percent of the sample and inmates on remand were 55.4 percent.

**Table 40: Jamaica**

	Census			Sample		
	On Remand	Sentenced	Total	On Remand	Sentenced	Total
Tower Street ACC	124	1228	1352	22	213	235
St. Catherine ACC	2	747	749	0	130	130
Horizon Adult Remand Centre	734	54	788	128	9	137
Fort Augusta ACC	35	67	102	35	67	102
Richmond Farm ACC		149	149	—	26	26
Tamarind Farm ACC		211	211	—	37	37
New Broughton Sunset ACC		33	33	—	—	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>2,489</b>	<b>3,384</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>667</b>

The total inmate population in Jamaica was 3,384. We note that mentally ill people are housed in Jamaica's prison system and that this subpopulation was eliminated prior to sampling. Of the sample, 72 percent were sentenced (some appealing) and 28 percent of them were remand. A total of 102 women were registered for the surveys.

Table 41: Suriname

Sample (Census not provided)	On Remand			Sentenced			Grand Total
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	
Prisons per District							
DISTRICT Paramaribo							
Central Penitentiary (CPI/BOMA)	3	4	7	99	12	111	118
HVB (House of Remand)	66		66	46		46	112
DISTRICT Nickerie							
Penitentiary Hazard				34		34	34
DISTRICT Paramaribo							
Penitentiary Duisburg	4		4	70		70	74
Total All Prisons	73	4	77	249	12	261	338
Police Stations per District							
DISTRICT Paramaribo							
Nieuwe Haven	35		35	2		2	37
Keizerstraat	41		41			0	41
Geyersvlijt	24	20	44			0	44
Uitvlucht			0			0	0
Latour			0			0	0
Flora			0			0	0
Subtotal	100	20	120	2	0	2	122
DISTRICT Wanica							
Kwatta	6		6				6
Santo Boma	10		10				10
Leiding	5		5				5
Lelydorp	14		14				14
Houttuin	6		6				6
Santodorp	4		4				4
Subtotal	45		45				45
Total All Police Stations	145	20	165	2	0	2	167
Grand Total	218	24	242	251	12	263	505

Suriname's total prison population was 1,411 inmates. All 36 female inmates were surveyed. It is important to note that in Suriname, some inmates on remand are housed in prison, a substantial proportion are housed in police stations. The survey sample in Suriname was 48 percent inmates on remand and 52 percent convicts. The extremely remote location of some of the facilities made them hard to access, thus some weightings were changed to compensate. This was done with the knowledge of the IDB and in agreement with the local team, which found that the characteristics of the populations in these prisons did not diverge from the rest of the country.

**Table 42: Trinidad and Tobago**

	Number of Inmates (April 2018)			Sample		
	On Remand	Sentenced	Total	On Remand	Sentenced	Total
Port of Spain	355	225	580	58	54	112
Carrera		320	320		77	77
Golden Grove		275	275		66	66
MSP	737	480	1217	118	115	233
Tobago	29	16	45			
Remand	1085		1085	174		174
Women's Prison	75	48	123	40	25	65
ECRC	14	131	145	3	32	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,295</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>3,790</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>762</b>

In Trinidad and Tobago, the prisons housed a total of 3,790 inmates. Of these, 123 were female and 65, or 53 percent, were surveyed. Of the total sample, 48 percent were convicts and 52 percent were on remand.

### Weighting<sup>32</sup>

The statistical analyses that were conducted based on the reports for each country adjusted the results by gender. Since the samples of women overrepresented their real weight in the population, the gender weights (ponsex) with different values for each country were calculated. The following table specifies the values for each gender and country weight consideration. These data are included in the database with their own variable (ponsex\_pais).

**Table 43: Gender Weighting Values**

	Male	Female
Trinidad and Tobago	1.01	0.73
Barbados	1.07	0.99
Suriname	1.00	0.86
Jamaica	1.03	0.59

<sup>32</sup>Women have been overrepresented in the sample in order to have an adequate sample size of this group for subsequent tests of statistical significance. Therefore, in the analyses presented in this report, we have used the gender weight in order to correct for possible biases from the overrepresentation of the female population.



## Implementation

### Selecting and Hiring Local Teams

The local teams that conducted the prison surveys in each country were predominantly universities with specialists in the field of surveys and knowledge of the prison system. The institutional partners in each country were:

- **Trinidad and Tobago:** University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. Criminology Dept.  
Responsible: Dr. Randy Seepersad
- **Jamaica:** University of the West Indies, Mona. Centre for Leadership and Governance.  
Responsible: Nicola Satchell
- **Suriname:** Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname/Anton de Kom University of Suriname, Instituut Maatschappijwetenschappelijk Onderzoek/Research Institute for Social Sciences.  
Responsible: Dr. Sabine de Vries
- **Barbados:** University of the West Indies, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies.  
Responsible: Dr. Corin A. Bailey

The strategic and collaborative partnership with academic institutions allowed for effective fieldwork and for the maintenance of quality. To assure this quality level, the general management of the CELIV team made field trips (at least 2 days in each of the 4 countries in the contract) to assess and train local partners.

The tasks of local teams consisted of:

- Communicating with prison directors
- Obtaining permits to operate
- Sampling prisoners according to the rules
- Selecting and training interviewers
- Developing the pre-established number of surveys with given characteristics
- Reviewing, supervising, and editing of the data material
- Recording data
- Analyzing the survey data for each country and writing country reports based on the findings

The IDB and the CELIV were in charge of selecting the local partners based on the previous professional history and logistic capacity. The project directors traveled to each of the countries to dialog with prison authorities, provide training, coordinate activities, and direct supervision of all processes according to pre-established protocols. On some occasions, trips were required to resolve specific issues and to visit prisons.

### Training

In each country, training was conducted by one of the general directors of the project or by a former local partner. In the training sessions, the questionnaire, the most relevant skip logic and filters, and other

important features were explained. The corresponding Training Manual was sent to the IDB prior to the start of training. The dates of the training and those responsible were as follows:

**Table 44: Training Dates**

Country	Year	Date	Team
Trinidad and Tobago	2018	July 25–27	Safranoff, Ana Manzelli, Hernan
Jamaica	2018	July 30–August 1	Manzelli, Hernan
Suriname	2018	October 15–17	Seepersad, Randy
Barbados	2018	October 8–10	Seepersad, Randy

### Field Operations

To implement the survey program, a work schedule was developed with the local teams, considering the characteristics of each country and each institution. Generally, it was possible to comply with the schedule despite some minor setbacks and/or difficulties typical of fieldwork conducted inside prisons.

Each survey lasted between 35 and 45 minutes and in most cases the results were collected using a digital questionnaire administered using a tablet. The surveys were conducted with the Survey-To-Go Software.

**Table 45: Field Operation Deadlines**

Country	Year	Start	End
Barbados	2018	October 10	November 20
Trinidad and Tobago	2018	July 30	August 24
Suriname	2018	October 17	November 14
Jamaica	2018	August 7	September 8

The technical and operational guidelines for data collection that were given to each country partner were:

- Loyalty to the sample specified by the CELIV headquarters in terms of strata to be sampled
- Randomness in selecting the unit of analysis (main and replacement)
- Minimal working time in each prison unit
- Express consent and incentives for participation

### Verification of Compliance with Standards: Questionnaire, Sample, and Final Data

To ensure the fidelity of the questionnaire and the sample, the CELIV performed multiple face-to-face (and remote) technical support and control tasks for the field team. Regarding the questionnaire, the CELIV was in charge of elaborating, reviewing, modifying, and adapting the questionnaire according to each linguistic, legal, social, and prison context. This involved rewriting questions, coordinating their writing with the local team, and verifying correct deployment of the programmed questionnaire. In each country, the CELIV team was in contact with the local team, testing the questionnaire programming remotely and in situ when they went to conduct training and the pilot test. Inconsistencies that were detected were corrected at the time and emails about changes were exchanged with all countries to ensure the correct application of the programmed questionnaire and its output in SPSS.

For the surveys in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, tablets were used to minimize errors in data entry. Each country used a programmer to facilitate the digitization adjustments. Although the strategy was effective, CELIV staff spent a lot of time verifying the consistencies of the programmed questionnaires, the breaks between sections, and the quality of the SPSS output. For Suriname and Barbados, the strategy was somewhat different. A single programmer was used to minimize differences in programs, codes, etc. Another programmer was also used to ensure the quality of the data collected.

Operationally, the programmer encoded the fully operational questionnaire and ensured that the survey performed according to specifications in each country. Programmers were also required to ensure that the SPSS syntax was similar across countries to simplify the merging of the data. In addition, the programmer provided 5 hours of technical support to each country during the fieldwork. Each country bought its survey package and adjusted the questionnaire in conjunction with the CELIV and the programmer. As a result of this work modality, the number of errors or outliers were very few in each country, which further improved the quality of the data.

Regarding the sample, the primary researcher in each country verified that the quotas of people by prison, sex, and judicial condition sent by the CELIV were met. To do this, partial shipments made by local teams were verified, relevant variables were cross-referenced, and inconsistencies were identified. Given the joint and timely work, there were very few problems. The few issues detected did not reduce the quality of the survey and its processing.

With regard to the sample, the randomization of cases was guaranteed and verified in multiple ways. On one hand, the CELIV team trained the local teams to correctly perform this procedure in the field. To do this, a member of the CELIV team accompanied each local team in the field to demonstrate how this should be done. During the visits to the penitentiaries, the local teams asked the authorities to list the names of the prisoners so that they could assemble a systematic random sampling of the units of analysis prior to the survey. Likewise, the local teams were required to use the same method to prepare a random list of replacements in the event of non-response by the inmates in the first random selection.

In order to minimize the non-response rate, interview teams were directed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The survey was designed to start with an informed consent form that highlighted anonymity and confidentiality. In addition, there were two instances embedded within the survey to verify consent. Inmates are often afraid to answer questions because they fear that the information can be used against them in the judicial process, that other inmates can retaliate against them, or that it will affect how they are treated by prison officers. Local teams were also allowed to give small incentives to inmates to increase participation rates and to help build rapport.

With regard to data cleaning, the CELIV team examined data on an ongoing basis. Data were provided by the country teams as the surveys progressed. Using electronic data capture allowed all completed surveys to be uploaded daily and consolidated as SPSS files that could then be analyzed by the CELIV. The CELIV team looked at a number of things, including sampling, the consistency between responses and the questions asked, and that the skip logic was adhered to.

To ensure the data from all countries was merged, the CELIV team reviewed the survey programs on tablets, processing codes in SPSS, and any other issues related to the final database. This ensured that there were similar values of variables, homogenous names, etc. Consistency across all of the participating countries was essential to ensure the successful merging of the final dataset. In terms of final consistency, the CELIV team consolidated all the databases of all countries into a single file, ensuring similar syntaxes, values, codes, categories, and levels of measurement of variables. This allowed for a consistent and accurate final regional report.

### Statistical Test Between Subgroups

As noted in the footnotes, we conducted a hypothesis test for the difference between means of both groups. For interval variables, a t-test and a Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test were conducted. A Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test was also used to analyze differences between means of ordinal variables. For categorical variables, Fisher's exact test was performed. However, the different tests show no discrepancies in terms of p-values and rejection of null hypothesis of equal means. As a result, and in order to avoid introducing unnecessary results that would show exactly the same findings, only results for t-tests are shown in this appendix. Results for other tests are available on request.

**Table 46: T-test Results for Gender Mean Differences (n=3,528)**

	Male	Female	P-value
Binary variable if have children (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.65	0.79	0.00
Age when first child born (0 if age>=19; 1 if age<=18)	0.16	0.39	0.00
How many children do you have?	1.69	2.29	0.00
Partner in prison (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.02	0.17	0.00
Education level (1=Didn't attend; 8=University)	4.2	4.84	0.00
Work before detention (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.22	1.3	0.00
If he/she was punished with physical violence (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.68	0.65	0.37
If mother suffered physical violence (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.31	0.36	0.13
Family has been in prison (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.48	1.56	0.02
Leave home before 15 (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.82	1.83	0.55
Consumption of drugs or alcohol (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.69	1.95	0.00
Accused of using of physical violence (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.73	2.00	0.39
Has been in juvenile detention center before (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.84	1.94	0.00
How many times has been arrested before?	4.74	2.59	0.20
Have you been in prison before? (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.58	1.89	0.00
Cleaning work (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.66	1.27	0.00
Other labor (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.77	1.69	0.02
Sports activities (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.54	1.72	0.00
Has seen other inmates being beaten (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.16	1.38	0.00
Has been attacked or beaten (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.78	1.87	0.00

**Table 47: T-test Results for Young/Adult Mean Differences (n=3,472)**

	Old	Young	P-value
Has been in juvenile detention center before (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.91	1.74	0.00
How many times has been arrested before?	5.03	3.83	0.03
Have you ever had a firearm (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.63	1.58	0.00
Age of first firearm	20.1	15.73	0.00
Consumption of drugs or alcohol (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.76	1.62	0.00
Drugs alcohol 6 hours prior crime (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.69	1.7	0.55
Gangs in neighborhood (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.6	1.51	0.00
Family has been in prison (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.52	1.43	0.00
If mother suffered physical violence (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.3	0.3	0.16
If he/she was punished with physical violence (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.7	0.64	0.00

**Table 48: T-test Results for Repeat/First-Time Offenders Mean Differences (n=3,500)**

	Repeat Offender	First Time in Prison	P-value
Binary variable if have children (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.68	0.65	0.07
Age when first child born (0 if age>=19; 1 if age<=18)	0.17	0.18	0.56
How many children do you have?	1.74	1.74	0.96
Education level (1=Didn't attend; 8=University)	4.08	4.36	0.00
Consumption of drugs or alcohol last month (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.65	1.75	0.00
If have ever tried drugs (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.83	0.61	0.00
Drugs alcohol 6 hours prior crime (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.61	1.75	0.00
If he/she was punished with physical violence (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.73	0.64	0.00
If mother suffered physical violence (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.38	0.28	0.00
Leave home before 15 (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.78	1.84	0.00
Gangs in neighborhood (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.51	1.61	0.00

**Table 49: T-test Results for Pretrial/Sentenced Offenders Mean Differences (n=3,500)**

	Pretrial	Sentenced	P-value
If place is overcrowded (0=No, 1=Yes)	0.41	0.38	0.07
Has been attacked or beaten (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.77	1.8	0.08
Has seen other inmates being beaten (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.19	1.16	0.03
Feel safer regarding previous place (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.9	1.78	0.72
Sports activities (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.59	1.54	0.01
Educational activities (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.75	1.63	0.00
Other educational activities (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.87	1.71	0.00
Cleaning work (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.73	1.55	0.00
Other labor (1=Yes, 2=No)	1.91	1.66	0.00