



Young men and women affected by violence

In the Caribbean, the pervasive influence of violence profoundly affects the lives of young men and women, casting a long shadow over their potential for peace and security. This region, marked by its vibrant culture and history, is also scarred by a legacy of high homicide rates, significantly exceeding those in many conflict zones globally. Young men, in particular, find themselves ensnared in a cycle of violence, often related to organized crime and the narcotics trade. The lure of gang affiliations and the pressure of economic survival drive many into perilous circumstances, making them both perpetrators and victims of violence.

Young women in the Caribbean face distinct challenges, enduring the brunt of gender-based violence and femicide. The region's femicide rates rank among the highest in the world, a grim testament to the pervasive inequality and gender discrimination. Women's vulnerability is exacerbated by their often marginalized status, with incidents of sexual violence, exploitation, and domestic abuse remaining alarmingly prevalent.

Both young men and women grapple with the consequences of forced evictions and territorial disputes, primarily driven by the lucrative drug trade and the quest for control over valuable natural resources. These dynamics fuel a relentless cycle of violence and displacement, undermining community cohesion and sustainable development.

The Caribbean's struggle with violence against youth is compounded by deep-seated socioeconomic disparities and entrenched inequality. Despite progress in some areas, the promise of education, employment, and health remains elusive for many, perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion. Young people's engagement in peacebuilding and conflict resolution is crucial, yet their efforts are often hindered by a lack of support and resources.

Addressing the plight of the Caribbean's youth necessitates a multifaceted approach, emphasizing violence prevention, education, and economic empowerment. Initiatives must prioritize gender-sensitive strategies and youth-inclusive policies to dismantle the structural barriers that perpetuate violence and inequality. The international community, regional organizations, and local governments must collaborate to foster environments where young people can thrive, free from the scourge of violence and with equitable opportunities for all.