

## ABSTRACT

The Social Problems of Youth in Trinidad and Tobago's Society:  
Educational Challenges and Response

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This study, situated in the human development paradigm, focuses on youth development in Trinidad and Tobago, specifically within the 15-19 age group. A large percentage of the youth development literature on social problems highlights the importance of health and wellness and the role of education as youth make transition to adulthood. This study uses qualitative content analysis against the backdrop of the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development's (CGCED) "ecological" framework for youth development, to analyse the social policies. Schutz's postulate of adequacy and his "ideal type", common sense, interpretative analysis of data offer understandings of the perceptions of policymakers in education and health and practitioners at schools based on their structured interviews. The analysis of the data revealed that the stakeholders perceived that negative international forces and poverty place youth "at risk". These factors caused youth to be at risk of many social ills, the predominant one being HIV/AIDS. Further that youth health and wellness remains challenging, despite several strategic, educational initiatives. Curriculum diversification and a strong structure-agency nexus are needed to advance youth health and wellness to achieve sustainability. The emerging findings have implications for the education-health connections, inter-sectorial linkages, curriculum reform, youth empowerment and national sustainability.

Key Words: Patricia Anthony-Sealy; social policy; youth development; youth health and wellness; educational response.