

# **‘she sweet up the boopsy and him nuh get nuh wine’**

## **Young women and sexual relationships in Kingston, Jamaica**

A PEER study carried out by  
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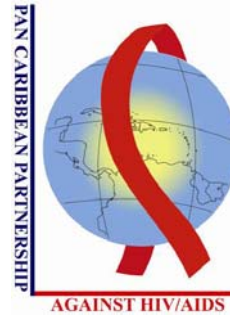
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## **GLOSSARY**

To check	To visit or date someone
Dash wey belly	To have an abortion
Garrison communities	Areas controlled by organised political gangs
Grill up	Place safety bars around veranda / over windows
Hype	Cool, fashionable, fun, or wild
Matrifocal	Family unit focussed around the mother
Obeah	South Caribbean form of the practice of voodoo
Passa Passa	Street dance
Pickney	Child
Relationship mash up	Relationship break down
Skettel	Promiscuous woman, prostitute
To talk to	To have sex with

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

This report presents findings from a qualitative study into young women's sexual relationships in inner-city Kingston, Jamaica, carried out between May and June 2007. The study aimed to explore the social and economic environment in which young women's relationships take place; to identify opportunities and barriers to behaviour change; and to generate insight into condom use, HIV risk perceptions, and types of sexual relationships.

After this executive summary, the implications of the findings for programmes are discussed. The detailed evidence and discussion from the PEER research is presented after this.

### Method

The study used the Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research (PEER) method. PEER is an innovative research tool for programme design, evaluation and research which makes use of existing relationships of trust to understand behaviour in detailed social context. The approach is based upon training members of the target group to carry out in-depth interviews among their peers (i.e. members of their social network). Fourteen young women from the community were trained as peer researchers and conducted 126 interviews with their peers.

### Findings: Competition in a Complex and Hostile Environment

The study provided detailed insights into the context in which young women's sexual relationships take place. The socio-economic environment shapes the opportunities and motivations of women, key aspects being:

- **Material deprivation**, poor housing conditions and limited opportunities for income generation. High levels of perceived personal insecurity, sexual violence, and frequent outbreaks of street violence.
- **A vibrant social life**, and desire to have fun and relieve stress through dancing, meeting people, romance and sex.
- **Complex and reciprocal systems of social support and loyalty** among friends, family and partners. A wide range of family structures, fragile relationships under constant threat, and fragmented families.
- **Public image** as central to social well-being. Women experiencing constant social judgement and gossip from neighbours, friends, and family members. Pride and determination in oneself are strongly valued.
- **Acute sense of social hierarchy**, on grounds of wealth, race, and social kudos. Low social position having serious consequences for wellbeing.
- **Young women compete to acquire status**, displayed through appearance, possessions, sexual reputation, and lifestyle. Relationships with men help women access these resources. Material wealth is desired, but young women do not want to 'become' like 'Uptown' people (as Uptown people are said to treat people badly and have 'freaky' sexual

practices<sup>1</sup>). Social competition relates directly to accessing social and economic resources, often through relationships with male partners.

- **Employment is seen as lacking viability/attractiveness** (low wages, sexual harassment). Young women have vague aims of independence or prosperity but few long-term aspirations, and perceive a lack of support from peers and community to reach goals 'above their station'.
- **Livelihood strategies** are seen as either **high risk, high reward** (generally through relationships with risky men), or **low risk, low reward** (domestic services, petty trading).

### Partner Types

Despite pre-dominant social norms to the contrary, multiple concurrent relationships are an accepted reality. Different partners fulfil various emotional/economic needs:

- The **personal man** is the primary partnership, who may or may not live with the woman. For many women, the **baby-father** is also their personal man. Women hope for, but often do not receive, support from him.
- The 'boopsy' is a man with whom women use the promise of sex to gain money or gifts for themselves and their family. They avoid actually having sex with him, though might occasionally do so to maintain the relationship.
- A **sugar daddy** is an older man with money. Young women need to maintain good looks and clothes to attract him. They have less control in this relationship: condom use is according to his decision.
- The **man on the side** is a regular partner outside the primary relationship and may be primarily sexually motivated. The main rationale for condom use with him is to avoid not knowing who has fathered a pregnancy.

**All these relationships have an important component of exchange.**

### Multiple Partners

Multiple partners are likely to be the norm, and are a rational response to socioeconomic realities, rather than the result of individual behaviour preferences. Women risk transgressing expected boundaries of behaviour by developing a range of relationships with men, to access various resources.

- **Perceived risks** in having multiple relationships include rape, disease, uncertain paternity of children, withdrawal of male support, and compromised social status if they go 'too far'.
- Women thought to be too open or undiscerning in their sexual partners are frowned upon. Sexual relationships with an economic rationale provoke less negative judgement than women with additional partners for pleasure.
- The **unpredictability of risks and rewards** requires careful strategising. Keeping potential partners in reserve for 'back up' is common.
- **HIV and STIs are an abstract and poorly understood risk** compared with immediate, tangible threats (violence or relationships breaking up).
- **Transactional relationships** are seen as very different from 'prostitution', and are discussed in terms of personal relationships of exchange. Even romantic relationships centrally involve gift giving and economic security.

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<sup>1</sup> The peer researchers judge Uptown women to have sexually inappropriate behaviour, though it is unclear what exactly this entails.

- Some women engage in transactional relationships for **basic necessities**, and family/neighbours may pressure them to do so. Young women are a resource for their family, and even male partners, who may also benefit.
- **Fun, sexual pleasure and social status** also motivate women. Their appearance and reputation require constant maintenance to continue attracting male attention, and to maintain/improve one's social position.
- **Men persistently pressurise or persuade** women to have sex with them. Young women do not necessarily seek out transactional or multiple sexual partnerships: it might be very difficult for them to avoid them.

#### Partnerships with Older Men

Older men are generally preferred partners. Relationships with older men are desired for a number of reasons, beyond the important financial imperative:

- **Paternalistic care** (e.g. bringing lunch to a school girl, encouraging ambitions) in the absence of parental care.
- Opportunity for **'lifestyle' experiences** (e.g. restaurants, shopping).
- Perceived as **more mature** and less volatile than younger men.
- Dream of **achieving their fortune** through relationships with older men.

#### Trust

The notion of trust has been adapted to the inner-city context to reflect the reality of multiple partnerships and complex social relationships:

- **Public demonstrations of trust** are more important than behaving honestly and faithfully. Trust is defined as keeping to agreed standards.
- Women do not expect trust with partners other than the primary partner.
- **Trust is linked to 'respect'**: believing their partner will not disrespect them **publicly**, or reveal personal information about them.
- **Men cannot publicly accept female infidelity** yet probably know that it happens. Men unable to provide for their women might have to accept their partner looking elsewhere.
- Although against the romantic ideal, **many women accept or tolerate their primary partner's infidelity**, provided it is done discretely.

Issues such as condom use which are so closely associated with trust therefore have significant implications for relationships.

- If infidelity is suspected, **women often do not say anything, but rather do something** to indicate their suspicion, such as ask to use a condom.
- **Men or women who initiate new behaviour** (such as condom use with primary partners) risk being talked about and judged by peers and partners, and risk public ridicule or isolation.
- **Trust is required in relationships** if they are to withstand pressures that ever-present gossip produce, and to maintain self-worth. Introducing condom use could threaten trust, which could threaten the relationship.

#### HIV and AIDS and Condoms

**People speak 'authoritatively' on HIV and AIDS** while misunderstanding many aspects.

- Widespread belief in **rapid decline after HIV diagnosis** may be a barrier to HIV testing. **Stigma is widespread**. Stories of HIV talk of social isolation, revenge, blame, and HIV+ people maliciously infecting others.

- **Exaggerated stories about HIV and AIDS** suggest most people are unfamiliar with the reality of HIV and AIDS.

Beliefs in ability to detect sexual risk, and stereotypes associated with HIV, represent a **local risk assessment framework for judging HIV risk** which may cause people to underestimate their risk:

- People use a variety of **strategies to judge HIV risk** of partners, e.g. checking their skin and using touch and intuition during foreplay.
- Social (rather than sexual) **background and current sexual behaviour** are also used to assess risk, ignoring the possibility of past exposure.
- **Risk might be assessed against stereotypes** of HIV+ people (typically promiscuous young women, prostitutes, drug addicts and taxi drivers).
- Women see **mothers as central role models** in promoting safe sexual behaviour. Young women ignore their mothers at their peril.

Condom use is influenced by **type of partner and stage in relationship**. The data suggest inconsistent use with non-primary partners, and reluctance to use with primary partners after the initial stages of the relationship.

- **Benefits of condoms are widely recognised**. Avoiding diseases is discussed more frequently than pregnancy, suggesting there is considerable motivation to avoid STDs, and not just HIV.
- Condom use is **fairly acceptable the first time** a couple have sex, or in perceived **risky situations**, seen to symbolise care and good intentions.
- If a relationship develops into a primary relationship, **consistent condom use is the exception**. Not using condoms helps define a primary relationship. Condom use represents a sign of infidelity.

Quality and experience of using of condoms, and supply factors:

- **Barriers to use** include condoms not feeling comfortable or pleasurable, quality issues, peer pressure and allergies.
- **Allergies, itching, and rashes**, for men and women, are an important problem. Reasons for this are unclear but deserve greater attention.
- There is widespread awareness of the importance of **'being prepared'** and having condoms on one's person or in the house.
- **Pharmacies are the most trusted location** to buy condoms.
- Women are reluctant to buy condoms from shops because of an attitude that **male condoms are for men**.
- There is wide awareness of the existence of the **female condom**, but little detailed knowledge of them or enthusiasm to use them.
- Many people indirectly source condoms from friends or relatives.

There is **high brand awareness**, based on smell, texture, and reliability:

- **Prolonging sex, thickness, and strength** are most frequently used to describe brands, over and above qualities such as comfort or sensitivity.
- **Price of condoms is not mentioned**, suggesting cost not a major barrier.
- **The smell of condoms is important**: some complaints about smell of cheap condoms, others report shampoo scent appealing to women.

Influential People

A salient referent is influential in establishing normative beliefs and values:

- Young women **want to be positively led and supported**, and perceive themselves as vulnerable to bad influences.
- **Mothers** and other senior female relatives are reported to be important confidantes, providing a positive, supportive influence.
- Women admire **down-to-earth**, local women more than rich and famous.
- **Friendships and peer groups** very important influence.
- **Internal qualities** (e.g. determination) are thought to influence a person's fate. Young women are not fatalistic, but feel life is shaped by people's character, and the support or hindrance of those around them.

# 1 Implications for Programmes

This section outlines implications of the PEER findings for HIV prevention programming among young women moving towards, or already in primary partnerships. We also discuss the wider implications for behaviour change communications and other interventions for both HIV and sexual health in general with young women in inner-city Jamaica.

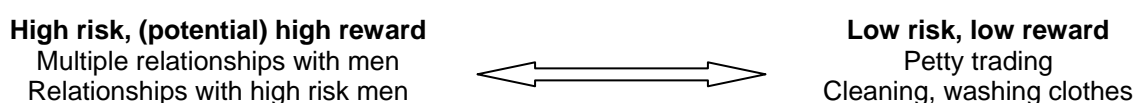
## 1.1 Managing Risks

The findings demonstrate the complex realities for young women negotiating a number of competing risks in inner-city Jamaica. A range of threats and opportunities compete for priority in the lives of these women on a daily basis. These data enable us to explore and interpret the internal logic which underpins how women conduct their daily lives, as they balance risks and strategise to meet their goals. In turn, this helps us understand how and where we can most effectively enable them to minimise risks to their health.

The ubiquity of multiple partnerships for women, and the strong perceived link between condoms and mistrust, are two central challenges for HIV prevention amongst these young women. These factors fundamentally threaten efforts to promote partner reduction and condom use in primary relationships.

### Multiple partnerships

As in many parts of the world where there are few formal employment opportunities for young women, relationships with men and having children are key routes into adulthood and sustaining a livelihood (see section 6.3). Sexuality and social skills are often the most important resources that young women possess. Although some women have profitable employment or a secure relationship they can firmly rely upon, many women actively exploit their sexuality, managing a variety of relationships (whether concurrently or serially). Although women recognise that this entails risk, the alternative is perceived to be a life of low pay and extreme poverty. The stark choice described by young inner-city women is illustrated as follows:



Women who choose multiple partners and/or transactional relationships often recognise the risks involved. Their apparent risk behaviour is a rational calculation between high risk and high reward, and low risk with low rewards.

It is simplistic to conclude that young women are just forced into risky sexual relationships, either by coercive men or through poverty (although both of these scenarios are common). We found young women to actively and consciously manage their relationships with different men, both to meet basic subsistence needs and to take part in the competitive life of the ghetto; to enjoy the material goods, status and experiences that successfully accessing resources brings.

The socialisation process of young women contributes to multiple partnerships being a widely accepted norm. Many young women in the inner-city have been brought up in female headed households and have seen firsthand how their mothers made use of relationships with 'different men for different purposes'. Consequently, informal, short-term, functional relationships with men are an accepted formula for young women in this context.

The dynamics of multiple relationships also make it difficult for women to negotiate condom use with certain partners. The insecurity of relationships with sugar daddies or other older men, and the aspirations that women have of high rewards with these partners, make women more willing to have unprotected sex to try to please them and maintain their relationship.

**Implications:** Unless there is a dramatic shift in economic realities and social norms, there is little potential for partnership reduction in this community. However, it would be possible to work on partner reduction with young women involved in coercive sexual relationships, either by improving their own communication and negotiation skills, or by tackling broader social norms (especially among men) which contribute to young women being in a position where they can be sexually exploited.

### **Condoms and trust**

The PEER data suggest that the main reason why primary partners do not use condoms together is not because they inhibit pleasure, or that they are inconvenient to buy, but because they wish to demonstrate trust to each other (see section 11.7). Within a context in which both women and men may have multiple partners, discontinuation of condom use is a symbolic act, and is a key way of differentiating a primary from a non-primary relationship. At present, condom use signifies mistrust if it is suggested beyond the initial stages of a primary partnership.

The reason for this link is conceptualised by women in highly rational terms. Individuals judge risk of HIV infection by their partner's current sexual behaviour, so see condom use as an admission of infidelity or suspected infection. Neither explanation sits comfortably with the important process of developing trust and romantic love. It may therefore be useful to disassociate condoms from their direct link to HIV in tandem with efforts to destigmatise HIV and AIDS. Rather than focus on HIV, there are other advantages of condom use which resonate with young women, particularly protecting against other STIs and unwanted pregnancy, which could be used to promote condoms.

**Implications:** Centring programmes on consistent condom use with the primary partner is likely to be challenging. The more closely condoms are associated with HIV prevention, the more condom use will be seen to represent an accusation (or admission) of infection or unfaithfulness. Unless alternative, or at least additional 'promises' are worked into condom promotion messages, the 'condoms-mistrust' association will continue to jeopardise

efforts to promote condom use in the primary partnership. Some ideas for alternative or additional messages are discussed below. Young people in inner-city Kingston are more likely to be receptive to messages about consistently using condoms with 'outside' partners, as this fits in with existing models of risk about casual partners, and there is an existing socially accepted precedent for this behaviour.

## *1.2 Getting the Message Through to Young Women*

In general, even the brightest and most ubiquitous social marketing campaigns will not be noticed by everyone, competing as they do with the wealth of communications materials in urban Jamaica. One approach to making health communications more effective is to make sure that they are targeted specifically and accurately at the target audience. Peer data give us a rich, up-to-date portrait of the target audience to be used for this purpose. The target group must immediately feel that 'this message is for me and is relevant to my life' and 'I can do something about this'. Where this is the case they will 'process' the message or information more thoroughly i.e. think about, remember and be more likely to act upon it.

Young women involved in the study have a very strong and specific sense of their own identity: where they come from, their values, and what they expect in life. Key aspects of this identity include:

**Fashion:** By the second day of the training week, the peer researchers had informally divided themselves into 'devils' (who wore revealing, flamboyant clothes and extravagant jewellery) and 'angels' (who dressed in more modest, but nevertheless tightly fitted, jeans and tops). Young people typically divide themselves into 'tribes' like this which are signified by fashion choices. Marketers need to consider carefully how they present the style of young people, so as not to exclude or alienate these sub-groups. What might be considered outlandish clothing in one part of Kingston may be typical for young women in another.

**Implications:** Ensure that communications contain characters dressed in a variety of styles, or that a carefully considered 'middle-way' of dressing is constructed which appeals to a wide range of women. Time should be spent among the community observing popular styles of dress. Characters' appearance should be pre-tested with a sample of the target audience to ensure that they can relate to them.

**Uptown/Downtown divide:** Young women from poorer communities do not relate to Uptown women, who they see as having dubious characteristics in spite of their 'nice voices' and modest clothes (see section 6.1). What is more, they are proud of, and enjoy, their own vibrant social and sexual lives in the ghetto which are reflected in the language and dress of the community.

**Implications:** Communications should reflect the context in which the target community live. It would be more effective to include realistic scenes within communications rather than scenes that are intended to be aspirational, featuring rich, well-dressed people. For instance,

setting an advertisement at a street dance rather than a nightclub is likely to resonate better with this audience.

**Language:** Young people from the inner city may speak a form of Patois that older middle-class Jamaicans may struggle to understand.

**Implications:** Current communications correctly recognise the importance of delivering communications in Patois, and it is important to keep track of constantly evolving vocabulary and turns of phrase, to make sure that relevant language is used in communications. Field testing with peer researchers would be particularly effective, exploiting their training as ‘immersed’ observers.

**Values and role models:** Young downtown women admire ‘real’ local people who demonstrate qualities they admire, such as determination, and succeeding in the face of adversity. These include working mothers who support themselves and women who have succeeded in their education. They rarely mention fashion icons or pop stars (see section 12).

**Implications:** It is often taken for granted that young people are influenced by pop stars, actresses and celebrities. However, the PEER data are overwhelmingly full of stories of local people who women admire and look to for inspiration and support.

**Aspirations:** Women are largely concerned with the short term: sustaining their livelihood, having fun, relieving stress, being respected, and having a broad social network (see section 6.2). Their awareness of their own sexual capital is evident and they are confident and assertive (at least on the surface) in public situations. They are not fatalistic, and want to improve their situation, but feel that there is a danger that people will be brought down by their peers or neighbours if they better themselves.

**Implications:** Messages should mirror the importance attached to having fun and sex, acknowledging that young women value their confidence in social situations (e.g. messaging similar to ‘with my looks/sexuality and my condom I am invincible/successful/popular/truly ‘hype’...’).

### ***1.3 Developing a Targeted Message, Concept or Promise***

This section discusses ways of designing messages likely to be effective in promoting condom use for this group. It is important that messages are carefully targeted and relevant; those which are clearly unfeasible or irrelevant to the audience may do more harm than good. For instance, telling women to stick to one sexual partner has the potential to alienate women and provoke a response of ‘these messages are not for me’. Such messages may also contribute towards stigma and social disapproval faced by women with more than one partner, which does little to help their position.

The need for ‘promises’ beyond health (in this case protection from HIV) is now well recognised in the health promotion literature (Monahan 1995).

Promises of future health are not strong motivators for many in the population, particularly in the case of these young women, who have short-term aspirations such as cool clothes, a reliable income, gifts, and social status. In this context HIV is not a high priority concern and perceived personal vulnerability is low.

When competing with numerous other priorities and concerns, such as maintaining trust in a relationship, wanting to get pregnant, or not wanting to anger a partner; wearing a condom in order to secure the promise of health may be far from women's minds. Some suggested alternative or additional promises are: 'Stay safe AND ...'

- **...have better sex**

This promise has already been developed extensively in Jamaica with brand-specific condom promotion (ribbed, lubricated, scented condoms etc) but deserves continued attention in generic campaigns.

Jeopardising this promise are the many references to quality/allergy issues with condoms (principally reported by men to young women), which warrant further investigation. It is vital to establish the extent to which this belief is grounded in fact (requiring a supply side intervention) or myth (requiring a demand side intervention).

- **... your partner will think you are a better lover**

There is some evidence that this promise is already in place for people at the start of a relationship, when condom use signifies care and respect. However, maintaining this promise into later stages is more problematic: 'he keeps on caring' or 'he never stops respecting her' might be messages which exploit this initial association between condom use and caring and encourage condom use to continue in a relationship. Communications should challenge the flawed logic behind the belief that after having sex with someone for a certain number of times, risk disappears.

- **... attract high status / wealthy men**

This must be considered when designing aspirational partner characters as an implicit promise. An explicit promise is not likely to be credible. While deliberately using older men as aspirational partners may send the wrong message, characters should be given similar characteristics to these preferred partners. The data suggest that women find attractive men to be those with good looks, access to money, and mature behaviour, without them necessarily being from 'uptown'.

- **... achieve higher status and recognition amongst your peers**

This promise reflects the high importance young women place in their social network and what others think of them (see section 6.2). It requires establishing norms at the group level of considering those young women who are able to routinely use condoms as street-smart,

cool, confident and in control. Young women who did use condoms could then hope to gain the approval of their peers.

The clear and consistent definitions of partner types provide a good opportunity to target communication to specific partnerships, and the risks associated with them:

*E.g. Promoting condom use with the Boopsy / Sugar Daddy: He is fun to play with, but will you be prepared to handle him when the time comes?*

However, this type of approach must cover all major partner types, otherwise there is a danger it will reinforce existing beliefs about certain partner types being more risky than others.

### **1.4 Problems with Access to Condoms**

Women often described indirectly sourcing condoms from friends and family, and being embarrassed to buy condoms themselves. Although price and physical availability of condoms appear to be satisfactory, there is a pressing need to reduce stigma around women buying condoms (see section 11.8). Outlet quality requires attention, including positioning of condoms within shops and attention to staff attitude. There may be potential for harnessing non-standard outlets, for example newspaper vendors, hairdressers, beauticians etc.

Although further research using mystery client surveys would be valuable, it is difficult to replicate the subjective experience of condom purchase for women in tight-knit communities. It is unclear whether stories of women being mocked reflect the *reality* for female consumers, or whether these stories rather reflect a widespread *anxiety* around condom purchase.

That the message of 'always carry a condom' is already widely acknowledged by young people is evident in the PEER data, and advertising already reflects the idea that condoms should be seen as part of the essential apparatus of youth, 'I always take my cell and my condoms'.

### **1.5 Beliefs to Reinforce**

Health promotion theory has argued that it is more effective to reinforce existing beliefs than to try and introduce new beliefs or change existing beliefs (Witte, Meyer and Martell 2001). This section examines existing beliefs that could be built upon by programmes.

*Condom use in casual relationships:* there is a clear precedent for, and social acceptance of, condom use in casual relationships. At present condom use is common though not consistent in casual relationships. There is good potential to further increase consistent condom use in these partnerships.

*Attitudes toward condoms:* the most important attribute desired in a condom appears to be that it can be trusted (will not break or come off). This often includes wanting it to be 'thick' i.e. strong (see section 11.8). Condoms should include security and strength as part of their promise in their marketing.

*Being prepared:* it is widely acknowledged that it is good to be prepared as you cannot always know when an opportunity to have sex will arise. Being prepared should include both having a condom to hand, and the skills to negotiate using it. Having a condom should be seen as an essential part of the kit of a street-smart girl.

*Condoms to prevent STIs:* Concern about and awareness of STIs other than HIV suggest that this group would be receptive to messaging in this area, particularly framed in terms of threat to fertility. These diseases appear to be less stigmatised than HIV, providing a foundation to normalise discussion and testing amongst couples. A 'preventing STIs' promise may be more immediate, relevant and effective than the 'preventing HIV' promise alone.

## ***1.6 Interpersonal and Community Level Responses***

Although prevention efforts ultimately aim to impact on individuals, this study has shown that many factors influencing health operate above the individual level, within the family, peer networks and the wider community.

### **Social support**

The research indicates that young women are keen for open communication with, and advice from older women such as their mothers, friends' mothers, aunts or grandmothers. The family is extremely important and women credit older people, and the family with significant influence in terms of both success and failure in attaining their goals (see section 12).

Interventions promoting improved communication with older, trusted women might be particularly effective in helping young women access the support they desire. Providing the older generation with the means to offer appropriate support may create a powerful vehicle for behaviour change. Messages would benefit from the credibility offered by, for example, mothers' own lessons learnt from experience. Early condom familiarisation in this context may also serve to reduce the stigma around use in primary partnerships.

### **Communication and empowerment skills**

The research suggests that there is little frank communication within sexual relationships about issues of condoms, trust, and risk (see section 10.1). This issue can be addressed by encouraging young people to learn the skills required to talk about sex and relationships openly and honestly with their partner. By providing them with appropriate 'scripts' which set an example of how adults might talk to each other about these issues, young people will have a chance to hear what 'negotiating condom use' sounds like.

Use in mass media outputs would serve to legitimate this discussion. Communications must include both female/female, and female/male discussion to develop norms around both peer acceptance and effective communication. These examples should include and go beyond condom use, to include broad negotiation skills around sex, including skills to deal with pressure from men.

### **Disinhibition**

During data analysis, we considered what the target group are *not* talking about in relation to HIV. One theme was drug and alcohol use. Supervisors at Hope Enterprises noted that peer researchers and their informants were reluctant to discuss drug use, suggesting that it may be more of a taboo subject than sexual relationships. As drugs and alcohol act as disinhibitors and are risk factors for unprotected sex, it may be useful to conduct further research specifically designed to probe this issue.

### **Reducing stigma around HIV and addressing the existing risk model**

We find that health messages about HIV have been transformed by the audience and synthesised with existing beliefs, resulting in an often inaccurate local framework of HIV risk perception. HIV prevention efforts therefore have to compete with these beliefs. Work still needs to be done on basic education about HIV/AIDS, particularly taking AIDS related experiences out of the realm of the horror story. The popular belief that although individuals cannot 'see' the disease, they can 'sense' it in some way (see section 11.2) requires urgent attention.

Individuals are unlikely to process or respond to messages if they do not believe themselves to be vulnerable to the threat in question. In this case it may be possible to increase perception of relative risk without resorting to a fear campaign (as fear campaigns are now generally thought to be counter-productive). It is important to continue work towards destigmatising people living with HIV and AIDS. Showing normal people who are infected with HIV creates a more accurate model of risk perception and vulnerability. As awareness develops, and ART becomes more widely available, it is important to monitor regularly how local risk models change.

### **Delivering the message - The power of the anecdotal**

Whilst prevention campaigns seek to provide women with the facts about HIV, they must convey this information in a format likely to be processed. Public health professionals often think in terms of numbers, but the target population may not rationalise risk in the same way. Communications are likely to be better processed if perceived as 'authentic' and relevant, through harnessing the power of street talk and anecdote.

Outputs that demonstrate respect and admiration for inner city life and people are vital. The use of local frameworks of understanding, language and stories should be encouraged. The data demonstrate the vital importance of social networks, 'gossip' and image. Used carefully this may be exploited to develop effective local concepts such as, '*Show me your friends and I tell you who you are...*'

## 2 Background to the Study

This report describes findings from a qualitative study into sexual relationships, condom use and HIV risk perceptions among young women in inner-city Kingston, Jamaica. The research was carried out between May and June 2007, using the PEER (Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research) method. PEER is an innovative approach to programme research, design and evaluation. Members of the target group (peer researchers) are trained to carry out in-depth qualitative interviews among their peers (people of their own age in their social network). For this study, fourteen women aged between 15 and 24 years and living in inner-city Kingston were recruited and trained as peer researchers. Each peer researcher interviewed three peers on three separate occasions, resulting in a total of 126 interviews. Peer researchers regularly fed back details of interviews to supervisors, either in the form of written notes made during interviews, or as oral accounts which were recorded and transcribed by supervisors. The work was implemented by Hope Enterprises, a research consultancy based in Kingston. The research was commissioned by Constella Group<sup>2</sup> with technical assistance from Options' PEER Unit<sup>3</sup>, and funded under the KfW Caribbean Social Marketing to Prevent HIV & AIDS (CARISMA) programme.

The study aimed to generate detailed insights into young women's lives to better inform HIV prevention strategy, particularly around transactional sexual relationships and relationships with older men. These are widely acknowledged as a priority for intervention in the region, as they place young women at significantly increased risk of HIV infection. To date, the context and dynamics of these relationships have been poorly understood.

Few recent studies of young people and sexual behaviour in Jamaica have attempted to qualitatively understand the context and drivers of risk behaviour. Those that have been carried out have used mainly focus group discussions (Eggleston, Jackson and Hardee, 1999; Smith, Roofe, Ehiri et al 2003; Le Franc, Wyatt, Chambers et al, 1996). One of the limitations that has been identified with the focus group method is that they tend to reproduce accepted normative 'truths' (Price and Hawkins 2002). This risks reinforcing existing preconceptions about sexual behaviour rather than generating new understanding. The PEER method explores this subject using communities' own frameworks of understanding. By engaging with local women, PEER exploits lay expertise and existing relationships of trust within the community to generate understanding of behaviour in detailed context.

In order to understand individual behaviour, it is vital to locate it within the social and economic context in which it takes place. Peer researchers report a complex and often hostile social and economic environment characterised by deprivation, fragmented families, and intense social competition for resources, often resulting in violent conflict. They discuss treading a fine line between

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<sup>2</sup> A global professional health services company.

<sup>3</sup> Part of Options Consultancy Ltd, based in London, UK.

exploiting their resources of youth, sexuality and fertility, and the corresponding numerous risks that accompany engaging in complex relationships with multiple partners. If girls go 'too far' they are said to risk rape, disease, withdrawal of male support, and compromised social status. Young women therefore actively manage varied risks as they pursue their livelihood strategies in a context of severely constrained opportunities. They are not only motivated by socioeconomic security, but also by a desire for fun and sexual pleasure. Peer researchers also discuss with their peers types of sexual partner, risk perception and issues of trust in relation to condom use, which is found to be heavily influenced by type of partner and stage of relationship.

## ***2.1 Objectives***

*Overall objective:* To gain an in-depth understanding of young women's lives in inner-city Kingston, including:

- Exploring the social, economic and cultural environment in which young women's lives and relationships take place
- Identifying opportunities and barriers to behaviour change
- Understanding behaviour and beliefs relating to risks, including, but not limited to, sexual health risks

*Capacity building:*

- Training staff at Hope Enterprises in the PEER method for future use of the method in the regions
- Training a pool of peer researchers as 'lay experts' who can be used for future research, testing ideas and strategies for future campaigns, and monitoring

### **3 Literature Review: Young Women and Sexual Relationships in Jamaica**

This literature review focuses on the social and epidemiological background to the research, and what is already known about the context of young women's sexual relationships in Jamaica.

The reproductive and sexual health of young women, and the social context in which their health is either promoted or threatened, are priority areas for Jamaica. The most recent UNAIDS estimate for HIV prevalence in Jamaica is 1.5% of adults (15 -49 years). However, from 1982-2003 there were three times as many AIDS cases amongst 15-19 year old females than males of the same age in Jamaica (77 versus 25) (Jamaica NAC 2002). Young women are both more vulnerable physiologically to HIV infection than men, and more likely to have sexual relationships with older men among whom HIV prevalence is higher than men their own age. As well as being at higher risk of HIV infection, young women are also affected by the consequences of unintended pregnancy and STIs.

Poverty among young people is also an important social issue. Sixty-two percent of female youth and 37% of male youth are unemployed, compared with 11% of over 19 year olds (World Bank 2002). A recent PEER study on support and authority systems for working class youth in Jamaica found young people had been failed by the institutions that they depend on, including the police, the education system, church, and their own families and neighbours. Older people had high expectations of them but did not support them financially or socially to help them reach their full potential, and often abused their position of power in relationships with young people (Herbert and Levy 2007).

The World Bank has identified violence in many forms as one of the most pressing social development issues in Jamaica. This includes violent crime, often perpetrated by young men in gangs; sexual abuse, especially of children; and violence perpetrated by men against women in all social classes. One fifth of 15-19 year old Jamaican women report having been forced to have sex at some point (CDC 2003).

Although social problems remain in Jamaica, some indicators show positive trends. Compared with other Caribbean countries, Jamaica has relatively high labour force participation and employment of women. Indicators around political participation of women, maternal health services, contraceptive use, fertility levels, female education and earnings equality also compare favourably. In Jamaica, women have higher schooling and literacy than men (World Bank 2002). In a 2002-03 survey, 67% of 15-24 year old women had used contraception the first time they had sex, a rise from 43% in 1993 (CDC 2003).

However, a high rate of unintended pregnancy remains (over 75% among 15-24 year olds). Forty percent of Jamaican women have given birth by the age

of 20 (World Bank 2002). This is of concern because pregnancy and childbirth in adolescent women is often associated with health and social problems, including leaving school prematurely and suffering higher levels of maternal mortality. Youthful sexual activity and lack of realistic perceptions of risk contribute to high rates of unintended pregnancy. The mean age at first sexual activity for 15-24 year olds was reported as 13.5 years for males and 15.8 years for females in 2002-03 (CDC 2003). A 2001 survey revealed 86% of young people to be aware of the risks of unprotected sex, but only 12.6% of them to view themselves as personally at risk (Hope Enterprises 2001).

The complicated moral framework in which adolescent sexuality and fertility takes place in Jamaica has been widely acknowledged: young people receive mixed messages. On the surface, conservative sexual ideals prevail, but early childbearing is also tacitly approved of, and may be perceived to bring some benefits to young women (Eggleston et al 1999). The difference between the prevailing ideology and people's actual daily lives is reflected in the frequency of common-law or visiting unions which persist in spite of condemnation from the churches and high levels of religious participation. Critically, this reminds us that knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient, to result in someone adopting a particular behaviour (Le Franc, Wyatt, Chambers et al, 1996).

Family structure in Jamaica is often described as unstable. In 1997, 85% of children were born to unmarried mothers, and 50% did not have a father registered on the birth certificate, an indicator of lack of long-term partnership between the mother and father. 43% of households are female headed (World Bank 2002). However, many fathers will be in 'visiting unions' or other semi-permanent relationships with their children's mothers, or will play some role in their life (World Bank 2002). Fathers are expected to have responsibilities to their children's mother, and provide financial support to their children, facing social disapproval if they do not. Some have argued that high levels of aggression among Jamaican males may be influenced by men's frustration at their inability to meet societal expectations of providing for their children (World Bank 2002).

Women having multiple partnerships and having children with different fathers is a long established pattern in Jamaica (Le Franc et al 1996). Multiple partnerships, which can be simultaneous or serial, have been seen as an adaptation to economic vulnerability for women (Le Franc et al 1996). Multiple partnerships are one of the main risk factors associated with AIDS cases in Jamaica, along with crack/cocaine use, and (for men) sex with commercial sex workers (Jamaica MoH 2006). Understanding the motivations and dynamics behind multiple partnerships, and condom use therein, is therefore important.

## 4 Method

A detailed description of the methods used, including the training process, study design, and background information on the PEER method, are described in a separate report<sup>4</sup>.

### 4.1 *Recruitment and Training of Peer Researchers*

Hope Enterprises have existing links in inner-city Kingston, and identified and recruited the peer researchers. The criteria were that they should be women living in inner-city Kingston and aged 15-24 years. They should have had no previous involvement in HIV related interventions, and had to be willing to participate in the study.

Training took place over five days in a participatory workshop led by facilitators from Hope Enterprises with support from Options' research specialists. Peer researchers learnt a range of skills for conducting informal interviews, and were observed practicing gaining informed consent. Themes guiding the research and interview prompts were developed in collaboration with staff from Constella, Hope, Options and vitally, the peer researchers themselves, and are detailed in Annex 1.

### 4.2 *Data Collection and Analysis*

Peer researchers were instructed to interview three friends living in similar circumstances to themselves on three separate occasions. Each interview covered one of the three themes described in Annex 1. Interviews were conducted in the third person, with questions introduced in the form of, "what do your other friends say about..." Peer researchers were provided with notebooks in which to make brief notes, and regularly visited a supervisor at Hope Enterprises to feed back their results. Supervisors took detailed notes, or tape-recorded and transcribed these de-briefing sessions. These notes and transcripts make up the final data set, which is complemented by notes made during the peer researcher analysis workshop, which took place at the end of data collection.

The final data set consists of over 250 pages and 130,000 words, including 600 stories. Data were analysed thematically according to the pre-existing conceptual framework, leaving room to incorporate any new issues arising during discussion and analysis.

As the report has primarily been written for a Jamaican audience, quotations are presented in the peer researchers' original language (whether that be Patois, English, or a mixture). When essential, such as in the case of complex Patois quotations, words or phrases have been translated into English, or explanatory comments have been added.

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<sup>4</sup> Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation And Research (PEER): Adaptation of the method for understanding sexual networking amongst young women in Jamaica

Quotations used have been selected as particularly illustrative of the point in question. Where possible the authors have sought to explain issues in the women's own words, allowing the reader to access the rich and varied vocabulary of 'the street', and to gain insight into the attitudes and tone of the peer researchers.

## 5 Understanding the Context

### 5.1 *Competition in a Complex and Hostile Environment*

In order to make sense of the stories that peer researchers told about sexual relationships and HIV, it was vital to explore how young women experienced life in the city, because it shapes their expectations, relationships, and choices. Understanding the social and economic context in which choices and decisions are made is central to interpreting risk behaviour in this group. While individuals make decisions, choices available to individuals are determined by a range of wider contextual factors. While many of these factors may be beyond the influence of public health intervention, it is essential to take them into consideration in order to develop effective behaviour change and social marketing programming.

Kingston is described as a city with deep and highly visible inequalities between rich and poor. Not only are accounts from inner city areas characterised by material deprivation, but people in ghetto or garrison areas face personal insecurity and a host of social problems resulting from overcrowded, poor quality housing, limited opportunities for income generation, frequent outbreaks of street violence ('war'), and a sense that they are looked down on by those richer than them:

*Nice guys don't like low class girls... ghetto girls are too fussy and love to war.*

*Bad friends you can't really trust them; you will mostly find a good friend uptown and bad friend in the garrison.*

*People say the uptown are more classy, while the inner city people are more street smart.*

*Some a di family like the rich people... dem no really like we, when you hail dem, dem no answer. Sometimes she sey she feel shame, cause fi si you a call to dah person deh and dem nah answer you because through dem have it, dem don't want to answer you... If dem know sey dem have money and you no have none, dem handle you and cuss you and trouble you... And if you go a food shop go buy, dem want to push you, cause you no have it dem have.*

*Some families act like they are better than you. If they are in a better position than you, they act like you are the worst, like you are nobody.*

One important finding is that while successful individuals are respected, and material wealth is desired, young inner-city women do not aspire to assimilate into a middle-class lifestyle or 'become' like Uptown people. Rich Uptown people are seen as sexually 'freaky' (have differing standards of sexual behaviour to them) and as not treating people properly, as the quotes above show.

Within the 'downtown' area there is also a strong sense of social hierarchy and power differentials between different social groups and individuals. Being lower down in the social pecking order has serious consequences: stories tell of people manhandling poor people in the shops, throwing stones at poor people in the road, and young people being embarrassed to go out in public because they only had one outfit to wear:

*Cause nobody else pan di street don't like har. Cause dem sey she poor and she can't par wid. Cause if you look good and she no look good, dem a go sey look how har friend dem look nice and she look dah way deh.*

Another widespread prejudice facing many young people is racism. In general, stories present darker skinned people as more likely to lead others astray, and posing a higher sexual risk. Lighter skinned people are described as being more attractive as a sexual partner. Stories about people 'bleaching out their skin' to appear lighter are very common, and darker skin is associated with numerous negative characteristics.

*There is a boy who lives in the community. People would say he could have AIDS because he is brown, thick and short.*

High levels of poverty are also reflected in the data. Characters in stories often lack basic furniture such as beds or a stove, families are often crammed into one room, and medication is often perceived to be unaffordable. Finding school fees, bus fares and lunch money for children is a constant concern for many families.

*People unable to keep jobs. When you have a work that is a shift work and dem have dem little pickney and nobody to keep them. You get some sick days but in the night you don't have anybody to keep the pickney. You can call in sometimes and seh yuh sick but sometimes sick leave up and yuh don't have anybody to stay wid the baby. So when you call in sick them reprimand yuh and then if you do it two times them fire yuh.*

Violence forms a backdrop to daily life. Outbreaks of 'war' (armed street fighting between gangs), and the risk of rape, are felt to be a constant threat. On top of this extreme violence, a level of 'everyday' violence permeates the data. This includes arguments and feuds, often caused by jealousy or desire for revenge ('the youth stab har boyfriend and den har boyfriend shoot the youth and kill him on the spot'), and domestic violence suffered by women and children.

*I know this girl, she have this problem, she love gun man and them always a die. She been about five I know and they all die... The last boyfriend die was her baby-father. She got involve with one where some killing get involve and they had to run from the community and leave her family house... Where she is right now the guy and her children in a one room apartment and they are not comfortable. He get*

*in a lot of trouble with the police... and went to prison and she went on with her life.*

Within this environment, individuals are part of complex and reciprocal systems of social support. In garrison areas (not all inner-city areas are garrison) 'Area dons' preside over the 'garrison law' of these areas, and some have been reported to enforce vigilante justice, and abuse their positions of power in their relationships with young women (as well as occasionally providing support to the needy in the community). People are sometimes reluctant to accept help from other people because they then feel they are obliged to them or under their control. Dons and other powerful men might expect sex, and neighbours who offer help 'have something over them', and talk about them behind their back.

*She has lived in the ghetto for three years and there are certain parts of town where she still hasn't been. There are shootings and so on, and she won't go there unless there is a real reason. She will get a taxi through rather than walking through. She just doesn't want to get involved because even if they can offer her help, they would want something in return. She doesn't even know the name of her area don and doesn't want to know.*

Accounts of family life are similar to those in the academic literature on Jamaica, which describe a wide range of household and family structures, which are frequently unstable. Common-law marriages or 'visiting' partnerships are more common than formal marriages, and relationships are described as being fragile and under constant threat, resulting in fragmented families.

There is no typical model of a life course for these women in terms of partnership formation, childbirth and household structure. All women hope for support from their baby-father, but often do not receive it. The baby-father might not have money himself, or he might spend his money elsewhere (gambling and other women are frequently mentioned). There is a clear division in expectations around parenthood between genders: men are expected to be financially and socially responsible for their children, with women expected to provide financially as a last resort, if the father fails in his duty. Yet this 'ideal' arrangement is often not the reality, as the data are full of stories of women having to cope alone following abandonment by men.

One result of this complex and often hostile environment is a high degree of social competition over scarce resources:

*Is a competition in the ghetto, who first get what and who have how much of this and how much of that so them look more than the next person.*

Young women compete to acquire status, which is displayed through clothes, hair, material goods, reputation as a sexual partner, and lifestyle. Relationships with men are a key way for women to access these resources,

and men are thus a key element of competing for status. In the context of limited resources that is the inner-city, in order to get ahead, or even to survive, some women need to push or transgress expected boundaries of behaviour or take high risk choices. In some instances expected standards of behaviour for women are impossible to meet due to their vulnerable social and economic situations. Those who do so may suffer the social consequences, such as being gossiped about, even if they appear to be financially better off than their peers.

Another important element of inner-city life is people's motivation to have fun and relieve stress. Peer researchers describe a vibrant social life including dancing, networking and meeting people, and the importance of romance and sexual pleasure. Locations for socialising include night clubs, parks, dance halls or street dances, parties, and the beach. Having fun and socialising is also linked to access to resources: the sorts of activities that young women aspire to require money, and girls who stay at home with their families are often described as 'nice but boring', which suggests that poverty could contribute to social isolation.

*People say the fun they have is a risk they take, it's dirty, it's enjoyable and it's wild.*

*They are enjoying themselves while they are young, good and bad fun. Bad fun is when you drink. Some young girls guys tend to get them pregnant when they have sex when they are drinking and then they don't know who the father is. Good fun can still be drinking, going to dance, smoking. People go to parties. Movies, having sex, Asylum [nightclub], Heineken Star Time and Rum Ram (street dance similar to Passa Passa).*

The high density of young people with few formal activities creates a social life full of gossip and sexual intrigue, which is lived out publicly, on the streets and in people's yards. Public life and image are therefore very important: what other people think of you, and how you are seen to interact with others, strongly influences people's sense of social well-being.

This busy, competitive, sociable life results in one of the key themes in women's stories: the constant social judgement that neighbours, friends, family members and the community in general pass on everybody else. This is evident in gossip and 'talking about people behind their backs'. In all societies, gossip acts as a form of social control, and gossip tends to develop when a social norm or expected standard has been broken. In inner-city Kingston, there are severe consequences for individuals in terms of social sanctions if they get gossiped about. They may lose social respect, get beaten, suffer '*relationship mash up*' and may ultimately lose access to social, and therefore, economic resources.

*So a she a tell people her business, so that other people in a di community hear and a run her and fling stone after her and dem something dey.*

The stories women tell describe real risks for young women if they do not appear up-to-date, 'relevant' or 'hype'. While competition over appearance and status may appear trivial to the outsider, in fact they relate directly to competition for social and economic resources. The implications for women of failing to operate successfully in the social hierarchy may be social and economic hardship. Success is influenced by women's ability to form and maintain relationships with men, which in turn may ultimately affect whether there is food on the table for themselves and their family.

## 5.2 Aspirations

A general sense of short-termism in women's outlooks emerges from the data. The future is discussed in unspecific and abstract terms, with vague aims of independence or material prosperity (particularly owning one's house).

*There was a girl in the community who had a single parent, she went through college and had a job at the airport. She had her own car and house. She was a down to earth person, she always encourages young ladies to try to be independent and finish school. People would say from time to time, that she, she is my role model.*

There are some references to women who had built successful careers as doctors or lawyers despite coming from the ghetto, but these are rarely discussed in direct relation to individuals' own prospects. There is a lack of support from peers and the community for young people to reach goals 'above their station' or outside acceptable limits, which seems to be driven by the jealousy and resentment of others, if somebody was thought to be outdoing their neighbours or peers.

*Some of them just go to school and waste their time and sometimes it's the people around you who, when they see you making a start in life, they do everything to hold you down because they don't want to see you have anything in life.*

There are several accounts of people who had stuck at school and done well, despite a lack of support or encouragement. They had often been cussed or bullied by their peers. There are risks, or at least a price to pay, for people who stand out through their achievements:

*This girl was the only girl in the community who never drop out of school, an' because she never drop out of school, nobody in a de community never like her, and dem try everything fe bring her down. Dem even mek dis guy from another community fe pretend as if him like her anyway, she an' him start talk an' him get fe find out she is a nice girl and now they are in... a very good relationship. She is a lawyer and that is why my friend admire her, because she was under a*

*lot of influence but she never follow what people say about her or what they do.*

*There was this young girl who wanted to become a doctor and people would say she doesn't have the ability. One day she made up her mind that she would get her subjects and worked hard at school and now she is a doctor.*

Risks include being socially isolated or punished by peers, who may even try to jeopardise success. These stories demonstrate how completing school is seen as a remarkable accomplishment, achieved only against the odds and in contrast to most people. While people who are seen to 'rise above' get 'punished' by their peers, from a distance, success is admired by young women. It may be that admiration can take place when success is achieved by people with whom they are not in direct competition.

*... girl in community she is so gorgeous and she dress nice, I admire her because she is the only person in my community who hold up her head. She was in a group of friends, all of them get pregnant and they were influencing her to do the same thing so one day she just stopped walking with them and they walk and tell everybody in the community that she dash wey belly [has abortions] but she still continue her work and stay in school and she is now a doctor.*

It is clear that young women attribute a great deal of importance to self respect. Self-respect partly comes from social status, which is achieved through skilful management of social networks and public image. Dressing well, looking clean, smelling clean, and dressing appropriately (often to attract the right kind of partner) are all of fundamental importance in the stories. Pride and determination in holding one's head up high, in spite of problems, is crucial:

*[They admire people who] don't let anything hold them back in life... if they live in a community where gun shots a fire, they say nothing good don't come from that community, they still no make nothing hold them back, they still do their work, they still go through.*

Significant fragmentation of the family is indicated by the data, and the fathers of young women's children are often absent. However, relationships within the matrifocal household are perceived as extremely important. The family unit is complex but not weak, and is discussed as important and influential. The narratives indicate a clear sense of family loyalty, although family influence could also be negative, leading women astray or causing strife. 'Sticking together' was a clear value in several stories of young women, in which, for example, they took responsibility for their mothers during episodes of illness.

There is little mention in the data of the influence of having children in relation to status or personal identity, apart from when women were said to want to have children to access a man's economic support. Friendships, however, are

of central importance, and are thought to reflect strongly on individuals' own characters:

*She really mix fi har friend dem, if you nuh dress good and other friend, till people a tell har sey, you know sey you must not par wid dah girl deh, cause she a give you bad name, cause if you par wid har dem a go think you and har a do the same thing, cause she a go want you do things that you no want fi do, and a so comes she know how fi choose har friends dem.*

*Show me your friends and I tell who you are.*

### 5.3 Livelihoods

A central concern for women in a context of high unemployment and poverty is securing a livelihood, not only for themselves but often to support their children and wider family. Achieving a secure livelihood through employment or a career is not of central importance in the narratives, and is perceived as having limited viability and therefore appeal. Most accounts discuss developing a range of relationships with a variety of men to access cash or other resources (transport, clothes etc). These strategic relationships are discussed later,

*Not easy to keep jobs, yuh guh school and get the heap of subjects and even when yuh get the heap of subjects you can't get the work you train for and you have to settle for something lower and people have a lot of needs to meet so them don't want that.*

*To know the hard work dem go to school to do and have to settle for a little job so them don't bother.*

High rates of unemployment feature consistently in the narratives, and the futility of a work ethic is frequently discussed:

*They have to struggle like dog, no work no deh fi dem.*

*Mi a fi work like fool fi manage, some say beg, sell or thief.*

People have little faith in the fairness of the job market, believing you need connections to get well paid work. But even those in work struggle to make ends meet, as one job often did not pay enough, especially if there was a large household to support:

*Some people would say they have to work hard fe earn dem money...they have to work hard to earn dem living... most times they have to work two jobs one time just to earn money...they have to work two jobs to help support them family and dem have a lot of kids...them as the bigger ones have to work two jobs fe support dem smaller brothers and sisters because dem mother no have any money to send dem to school.*

Other problems make employment an unappealing prospect, such as sexual harassment or the high price of transport which decreased take-home pay further. In general, young women have low expectations of working life, characterised by accounts of hard work for low pay.

*You train as accountant and they give you janitorial work so they don't bother, low wages and distance to go.*

*...life is hard, they have to work hard for what dem want an sometimes dem haffi look work dat dem don't like because it pays more than other jobs... if you meet a man at dat work an him like you an yu sleep with him yu will get more money than if yu don't sleep with him...some people would sleep with him fe get more money 'cause them have a lot of children to take care of... any work dem get dem haffi tek it fe get money fe support dem children.*

Although young women have widespread admiration for successful career people, when they are asked about how people earn their money, their answers are dominated by low paid activities with short term prospects which are described as 'going out there to hustle': petty trading, selling domestic services such as washing clothes, begging, child care, or women selling their bodies. These are seen as 'dirty' and 'not pretty' activities:

*I ask her what do people do to get the things they want to achieve in the future, she sey well some a dem sey people would do anything and everything just to get what they want to achieve in life. So mi sey a what dat, what are things they will do, she sey some a dem will just sell dem body, as mi sey wash people dutty clothes, beg, and walk and sell, all a dem something deh. So mi sey who would a do this, well she sey, people who want things in a life.*

Other petty trading activities ranged from selling 'bag juice' by the roadside to 'putting out' their children for sexual exploitation. In general, what would be seen in many contexts as marginal income generating activities are seen as central in inner-city Kingston.

*She sey some people sey it hard, so dem ha fi walk and beg, and stay in a di hot sun a daytime and a sell, and nothing nah gwaan fi dem, but through dem know sey a just life, dem still a fi si dung in a di sun and a sell and a beg, and sometime dem a fi wash people dirty clothes, whey dem neva want fi do, and sometime dem a fi put out dem older girl child to man, just fi get money.*

'Honest earners' are contrasted with others who believe in a 'get rich quick mentality'. But it is also thought that 'those who rise quickly, fall easily'. Essentially, livelihood strategies can be seen as being either high risk, high reward strategies, or low risk, low reward strategies. It is thought to be quicker and easier to gain money illegally by getting involved in theft or selling drugs, though the risks of prison or getting involved with violence are also recognised:

*Some wait faithfully, they sit and wait and hope one day something will come their way or a job will come their way. While some do illegal things because it is easier and they get more money. They can buy a house and obtain money quick, can obtain money easy to buy a house.*

Poverty and neglect are recognised as contributing to illegal behaviour:

*Bad friends steal from them... it is the parents have a lot to do with it. They don't pay the child no attention; show them no love and no caring. They don't feed them on time so what they have in mind is to just go out on the street and do bad things and also beg a lot.*

Women also pursue strategies with varying levels of risk and reward. They draw on a range of resources in addition to their ability to participate in the labour market or market economy. Their sexuality, social status, family, social networks and children also helped them to secure livelihoods. Remissions sent from relatives abroad were another source of support for some families. Commercial sex work was discussed frequently, often in an accepting and understanding tone:

*Some say they work very hard and some say they do prostitution work and some steal and also beg a lot. Some prostitute because they just don't have anything else to do but that and you have some people that say they enjoy doing that kind of work and just love it.*

*My friend sister sell her body every night and one night when she go out on the road she meet this guy in a Benz and from she put herself with that man she a buy a house and she is looking forward to buy a car and move on with her life.*

However, the use of sexuality as an important resource is not primarily discussed in terms of 'prostitution', but is more often described in terms of personal relationships of exchange and obligation with men. These are men with access to material resources, some of whom are themselves described as 'juggling' to earn a living, often participating in illegal, high-risk activities. Other inner-city women have relationships with professional men, often from outside the community. These are often the 'big men' that girls refer to. Whilst a variety of partner types are described by women, fulfilling a variety of emotional and economic needs, **all** could be seen as having an important component of exchange. These typologies are discussed in the next section.

## 6 Partner Types

The narratives contain references to a range of partner types. These were discussed and clarified with peer researchers during the analysis workshop. The partner typologies were validated by comparing results from different discussion groups within the analysis workshop with each other, and with the primary data set (triangulation). This section considers the major partner types. Women have different expectations around trust, risk and behaviour with different partner types. Although on the surface, inner-city Jamaican society disapproves of women with more than one partner, multiple concurrent relationships are an accepted reality, and form a complex network of social support for women.

*...people say they have **boopsy**, and some say **sugar daddy**, and the **man pon the side**, and some say they have young boy. A man pon the side is the next man you have with your **personal man**, and is the man out a road weh a give you his money. They call him man pon the side because he is a next man. Woman you a tek, and you don't have to put him on the front line. He would be on the front line only if he never had a woman. On the front line means a **personal man**. A boopsy is somebody you take their money and don't give them anything in return. A sugar daddy is a old man, that give you his money for you to buy things and boast on his younger friends.*

*The personal man is the one they live with and you check for him no matter what and he comes before every other man and even have sex without using a condom. The boopsy is the one you take tings from him and him really don't get anything ... Sugar daddy is an old man who let off all the money because him love young girls and love give young girls money. So the sugar daddy would get one and two sex, but not like the personal man.*

*A girl who had different type of men who would always talk about her personal man and say nobody can come before him. She says the sugar daddy have to let off all the money and even all him pay (him have to give his whole pay check and him can't do nutten bout dat). She says she sweet up the boopsy and him nuh get nuh wine (sex) and seh to her friends yuh know seh my mouth sweet already and mi just call and seh one and two tings and him let off him money.*

### 6.1 Bonafide or Personal Man

The personal man or bonafide is the primary partner, described as, 'nobody man but your man', 'someone you love and respect and plan life with' (although the relationship is often also described as volatile). The relationship may develop from a friendship with an unspoken transition to the point where 'he discusses private things', for example 'show you his payslip', or he may ask directly, 'I want you to be my woman'. He may or may not live with the woman, 'visiting partnerships' being common.

As in most societies, the primary relationship is described as both an emotional and economic partnership. Ideally it is seen as a two-way partnership with mutual obligations that withstands economic hardships:

*Like the girl now she can't talk to fi har family, only like har auntie, she can't talk to har mother. The girl did have this boyfriend, him work in a di same welding shop, and every two week him a get like 10 gran, him give har like 5 gran fi har self. Like now no work nah too gwaan, because election a come up, so di youth stop work now. The girl usually wash fi him, cause through him mada deh a foreign, so through him can't give dem nothing again, har mada a tell har fi stop do things fi him. She sey she nah stop, because when him did deh pan him feet, him use to give har things, because har mada can't give har anything, only food and a place fi sleep. When him did a work, she get everything she need. And when she ask har mada fi anything she tell har sey, you nuh have man, mek you man buy wha you want. So she can't stop talk to him just because him nah work now.*

## 6.2 *Baby-father*

The baby-father is simply the biological father of a child. For many women he is also their personal man. In some cases peer researchers report an equal relationship 'until the pickney [baby], and then him own ya'. Discussions around the baby-father's role reflect the complex and varied nature of family structures. For young women, there seems no dominant model. The baby-father may either be live-in or visiting, and may or may not be a regular or occasional sexual partner. The degree of obligation she feels towards him, or the degree of control he has over the relationship, is to some extent proportionate to his ability to support her and her child.

The quotations below illustrate the complex relationships between women and their baby-fathers, as well as the social strife and economic hardship that is so common in the stories:

*There is a girl in the community who was a single parent and live in her parent's house. Her baby-father lived with another girl... The girl had sex with every taxi driver on the route that she live because she didn't want to pay any taxi fare. It ended up that her baby-father came back but the parents didn't want him there and an argument started where she cursed her mother and father because of the baby-father and her father told her to pack and leave. The baby-father moved her out and she had to pay rent. He told her that when he moves her out he will live with her but he didn't and left her there on her own. The rent was too expensive so she had to have sex with many different men to get money to pay the rent and she got an infection and it got worse and worse because she didn't have any money to look after it.*

*Girl in community who have two children for a guy in the same community; one day her house burn down and she had to stay with one of her friends while she was pregnant and her baby-father wouldn't take her in because he have a lot of woman. When she have baby he*

*keep passing her with different girls and if she say anything to him, him beat her. Every night him carry a different girl down a de house. One day her friend tell her to leave him alone and find someone different who can help her with the children, but if she bring any man come a her house him would beat her and tell her a dis yu a dis man yu know.*

### **6.3 Boopsy**

In Jamaican Patois 'boops' is usually defined as an older man keeping a younger woman (the 'boops' was referred to by peer researchers in this study as 'boopsy'). Among the peer researchers it has a clear and distinct meaning as a man of any age with whom women use the promise or potential of sex to gain money, favours or gifts. These are men with access to cash or other resources, rather than necessarily wealthy men. One woman, for example, includes a security guard with a regular wage in this category. Women flirt with these men for cash or gifts, both for themselves and their families:

*He will give you everything you want. Me call him and me get it. Clothes, car [i.e. lifts], shoes, money. Him like you, him willing to support you. Him just hope one day he get it [sex].*

Women used various strategies to avoid having sex with these men, including faking menses, visiting in large groups, and saying they were going to purchase condoms then not returning. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the peer researchers when discussing these strategies in the analysis workshops suggests this is a common practice and a popular topic of conversation within their social network.

Peer researchers and their informants discuss strategies to 'play' these men to gain maximum benefit. When men become frustrated, they 'cool it off' re-commencing the relationship to receive further gifts by hugging the men, dancing for them, or providing favours (e.g. house cleaning). Women reported having an infrequent sexual relationship with the boopsy, possibly providing 'a one piece to keep him going', 'once in a blue moon'.

*Nuff a dem say a one little boopsie me have an a so me manage. Well me hear one woman say she have a man, he is not her baby-father and he is not her personal man, so she have him as a little boopsie right now, just taking his money. People do these things because the baby-father not giving them enough money... This young girl she have one child from she was going to school but the baby-father give her money but it wasn't enough, so she go out one day and meet this nice guy but he was married so she wasn't really interested in him, he start to give her money, anything she want him give it to her but she just never want him, she take him as a little boopsie.*

### **6.4 Sugar Daddy**

A sugar daddy is an older, 'respected' man with money, 'over 40 and often in his 60s'. He might be married, with more money than a boopsy, often from selling drugs or possibly from a legal business. His primary motivations are

having a young female partner both for sex and to show off to his friends. Peer researchers report that young women need to maintain their good looks and clothes in order to 'keep him interested'. Men are said to boast to their friends that 'his young girl looks better than their young girl'. In the analysis workshops, peer researchers felt there was '*no question that every girl want a sugar daddy*'.

*You have to dress up sexy, entertain him, rub him down (masturbate or massage him), if you don't he cuss you and no money.*

*A ghetto girl has to dress up nice, look good and smell good [for him].*

A key aspect of the sugar daddy relationship is that peer researchers report young women to have far less control when compared with other partners ('you can't say no to sugar daddy'). Stories refer to him, 'watching you everywhere you go', and him 'putting him bodyguard on you'. They report pressure from families (who also benefit from the transaction) to find such a partner, 'submit to his will' and not alienate him.

*This girl has two men, a bonafide and a sugar daddy. She lives with the bonafide who is not working but maintain her whenever he has it. On Friday the sugar daddy calls her for them to go on the road to have sex to any hotel. When they are finished he will give her the money and take her home and if the bonafide asks where she was she will lie and he will believe. The bonafide would try his best but it wasn't enough because she wanted fancy things and a lot of money to maintain her. Sugar daddy wanted to give her anything to make her happy and feel independent. But whenever he gives he anything he wants sex before he gave her money. She always complaining about him but because the money is so nuff she has to live with it.*

Peer researchers report young women's aspirations to '*get him riches... to breed wid him... get in him will*' or '*get the child on the will*'. Stories describe mixed success in this regard. Some women become pregnant and receive no money or support, while others receive furniture or even houses upon the death of the sugar daddy.

*This last man whe give her money she have problem with him, him ugly, him can't satisfy her in a bed, him can't reason, but true she just want the money she just gwaan wid him until she finish buy her furniture dem.*

Although not universal, the stories suggest some consistent condom use with the sugar daddy ('*no condom, no ride*'). However, the decision to use a condom is described as being primarily in the hands of the sugar daddy. Unequal power relations indicate it is difficult for young women to negotiate condom use with this partner if he did not want to use one.

The relationship is described as transitory and insecure, and young women can expect to be 'dropped' at any time and replaced with an even younger

woman. Women report the need for a 'back-up', or at to least have identified an alternative partner, in case the relationship ends.

*The young girl dem think sey the older man dem, nice, cause after a while dem a go give dem pure sweet talk, tell dem one bag a pickney story and after a while start to show dem true self. Start handle dem up, gone man you no si sey you a little gal, gwaan man, whey mi a do wid little gal like uno.*

*She sey she know dis girl har friend, friend, a talk to this big man, but when she just meet him, him give har everything, but after a while him stop call har and stop come look fi har. And when she ask him so why you stop come look fi mi. And him sey you no si sey you a little girl, new kid on the block now.*

### **6.5 *Man pon de side***

This is a regular partner outside the primary relationship. He may have a primary partner of his own, and knows of the woman's primary relationship. Peer researchers report varying levels of emotional attachment, but it is taken for granted that he provides money and gifts. The man pon the side is reported as being an exciting sexual partner, enjoyed for being different from the longer-term primary partner.

Evidence for condom use with this partner is mixed. As the main partner for sexual satisfaction there is a desire to 'go raw' (have unprotected sex), which was expressed in terms of maximising the woman's pleasure, and also the man's pleasure, and therefore enhancing the woman's sexual reputation. They discuss how a positive reputation encourages the man pon the side's friends to also be attracted to them.

Peer researchers also report consistent condom use with this partner, to prevent pregnancy or STD transmission. Inability to use condoms with the *Bonafide* and the need to avoid uncertain paternity is a prime motivating factor. Pregnancy with uncertain paternity is one of the worst fates to befall young women in the narratives, as it means that the mother might not be able to secure support or social recognition the child's father. Oral contraception is suggested by women as another solution for this. The risk of bringing STI infection into the primary relationship is mentioned but not consistently. The data suggest that with this partner, condom use is potentially easy to negotiate, as both parties know that the other person has another partner.

Some peer researchers also describ a category of 'fuckerman', a casual partner taken for sexual pleasure, 'Him know his work', i.e. is a skilled lover. Peer researchers report that they 'want him to feel it' and therefore a condom may not be used. Again, his pleasure is important for their reputation.

In the analysis workshop, peer researchers also describe the 'spoojie', a younger male sexual partner. He is often a 'young boy not workin' who sleeps with older women for gifts and money.

## 7 Multiple Partnerships

The descriptions of partner types give insights into the nature of relationships in this community. The intense 'hothouse' atmosphere of the inner city presents a hostile environment for long term relationships, which are often transient, volatile and subject to a range of pressures such as interference from relatives, rumours, 'seduction' by others, intimate partner violence and economic insecurity. There are many stories of trust breaking down and relationships ending. There are also suggestions that trust is established quickly between new partners, with implications for condom use, discussed later.

The public health community have commonly separated types of sexual partners into distinct categories and attempted to classify women's reasons for engaging in these relationships. For example, multiple partnerships have been thought to occur due to the breakdown of the family; and intergenerational sex as a response to economic hardship and coercion; and commercial sex work as a response to severe economic hardship or drug abuse.

PEER data allow a more holistic and sophisticated understanding of these relationships. We find that multiple partnerships are in many cases the norm; that these relationships are almost all transactional to some extent; and that relationships with older men are generally preferred. Within the world view of these young women, this behaviour emerges as a series of rational choices made in response to socio-economic realities, rather than individual lifestyle decisions. As such, multiple partnerships represent a significant challenge to programmers who are largely unable to influence the behavioural determinants in question.

### 7.1 *Multiple Concurrent Partnerships*

There is a wide acceptance of multiple concurrent partnerships, which are perceived to be necessary for survival. The data contain hundreds of stories revealing the motivations, experiences and risks of engaging in these relationships which, whilst widely acknowledged, take place in a complex and often contradictory moral framework. Women hope to gain economic security and enjoyment from their relationships with men, but risk stigmatisation, pregnancy and infection. If they do not engage in these relationships, women risk compromising their social and economic status.

Young women discuss a variety of emotional, social and economic needs, which often can not be met by a single partner in the resource-poor and volatile environment of inner-city Kingston.

*Different men do different things. One is the one that she lives with and he stays home and they don't really do much he is in the house and he comforts her and they have sex but she doesn't go out with him on a regular basis. The second one might be one she goes out with and the third one she gets money from to support herself. The one that stays home and she lives with is the one that takes care of the children. The*

*one that carries her out is the one that buys her stuff likes clothes, shoes, perfume, carries her to the hair dresser to do her hair whatever, does anything for her. He prefers to take her to do the stuff. The third one if she asks for anything he gives her money to buy it no matter what it is. He is more into just giving her money.*

*A girl has two boyfriends and one is very gentle and considerate in bed and she enjoys having sex with him but the other one is so inconsiderate that she really hates when they have sex. She has a child, he's the one who gives her money, the other one is there for backup.*

*A friend got involved with a business man who is able to take care of her financially and send her to school and help her get an education which she admits she was very grateful for. However he could not please her in bed so she ended up having another relationship on the side. That helped her to overcome the disappointment men that she had with her real lover.*

The following story describes an illustrative scenario of how some women are seen to manipulate their relationships with men. It also gives an insight into the neutral language typically used to describe multiple partnerships:

*There is a girl who lives with her sister and have more than one man friend. Every Saturday she look for her bonafide, the guy weh she really check for. When he isn't working she spend the night with him till the next day. Any Saturday he is working she goes to look for the guy with the bus. When she wants to look for the next guy who lives near her mother she goes on a Sunday saying she going to look for her mother. When she is home sometimes and feels bored she will call the guy that drive and make him come pick her up and she and him will go out. She lives with her sister. The bonafide live near where her father lives so when she wants to see him she says she is going to check her father. When her sister is at work she would call the one that drive and she would meet him somewhere before the sister comes home in the evening because she know her sister would cuss. Sometimes after she go where when she finish look for her father she look for the driver.*

The language of this and previous stories is very matter of fact and non-judgemental. These stories tend to be told when women are asked about livelihoods or relationships in general. An interesting finding emerges when comparing 'matter of fact' stories such as these with responses to the question 'what do people think about young women talking to a lot of men?' Responses to this question are often moralistic and negative in tone, as the following examples show:

*People say they are whores, skettels, bitch... They are whores because they have more than one sexual partner and bitch means the same but when they say bitch it means like a slut dog that go around with every kind of man and don't care. Skettels are girls who run around. Because*

*every time a different man run in and run out, they change man like the clothes they wear .... They have more than one man because of money, to follow their friends because they are influenced by friends to have more than one man. It is in their nature to have more than one man (some girls just love nuff/a lot of man)...*

*A girl had many different men, and people would say that every night you see a different car, bicycle or a bike. The boy on the corner would say that she is a bitch, and she change man like how she change her panty, and tek man like how board house tek nail, and under there (her vagina) supposed to big. When she walks pass the boys and they call to her and she don't answer they would say 'stop gwan like yuh nice cause yuh know seh yuh a old whore and old seller'.*

*Another said that 'People say they are manie manie [full of men, so mane mane] or skettels. They behave this way because they talk to man that dis them so they keep moving on so they end up with a lot of man. They will stop when they find the right one to settle down with or catch some AIDS.*

*A 17 year old girl had a lot of man...She was a sex freak just love to have sex. No matter how people talk to her about her dirty lifestyle she will say one minute that she will change and another minute is a different thing.*

People have two different attitudes for women with more than one partner, depending what they perceive their motivation to be, and they way in which they handle their relationships. Women who are undiscerning in choosing sexual partners, or who are too open about multiple partnerships, or who are considered to have an excessive number of men compared with their actual needs are frowned upon. However, 'different type of men for different purposes' are widely accepted, as long as they are not just there to satisfy a voracious sexual appetite. Sexual partnerships discussed in the context of economic security arouse far less negative judgement than partnerships presumed to be for pleasure.

*Some say they love big man and some say is the right thing dem a do, talk to somebody that can give them something. A di right thing because they tek someone who give them anything they want and help them by sending them to school and giving them money.*

Transactional sex is also spoken about in a matter of fact way. Although there are lots of negative terms for women engaged in transactional sex or for women with multiple partners (bitches, whores, sluts, manie manie (have a lot of men), easy gal, and seller), there is a widespread acceptance that it is a way to make ends meet. Again, the women portrayed most negatively are those who are undiscerning in the types of men they sleep with, 'she just tek any type of man', 'they don't have ambition because dem tek up any man even the corner man who don't work'.

This aversion to open or 'out of control' displays of female sexuality is consistently apparent in discussions of how women are perceived by men and the wider community. However, among women themselves, there is acknowledgement of the fun and pleasure attached to developing new and varied partnerships, provided they are well managed. Some women described these relationships being best conducted 'out of port' (out of the area).

*If you are talking to a lot of guys in the community, there will be a lot of talk. But if you go out of port – people won't know.*

## **7.2 Emotional Support**

There are numerous stories in which older men provide emotional support and act as a father figure to young women. The literature on family life in Jamaica indicates that many young women do not grow up with the active support of a father, so they may be seeking a replacement figure.

*Older man own up to his responsibility they always tell people to do good things and tell them to follow good footsteps. Some say for money and luxuries sometimes for love and attention someone who them can talk to as a friend.*

*She knew a girl and her father stopped coming around from she was two. At 15 she met a guy who was 30 years old. He started to treat her right by treating her with respect and love and giving her money for school and buy stuff and anything she wants he would give it to her and give her the money to buy it. Treating her right like how a father would treat her by taking her out and buying her stuff like ice cream.*

*This girl would talk to older man because her mom is not paying her no attention so she talk to him as a friend he would counsel he rand tell her to do good things and hold up her head.*

*A 15 year old young girl is not getting attention, love, comfort from her parents. Whenever she wants money to buy books, clothes, shoes they may say they don't have it or they may promise her and don't give her. So she found a big man who started giving her things (money, love and attention). She met him at a pool party.*

## **7.3 Managing Risk**

Women have a clear framework in which they assess and manage social, economic and physical risks. These risks can only be understood when considered as a whole. The unpredictability of risks and rewards associated with multiple relationships requires careful strategising. Keeping potential partners in reserve for 'back up' is common.

*She say one time she did have a man and she tell him she have her baby-father so him say him will work with that. After a while he was telling her to leave the rest of the man dem but she said no because after she leave dem him might leave her so dem stop talk but he really*

*was treating her nice give her money and more money than the other rest of the man dem but she say him too ugly and miserable and always want to know where she is and all of that and she never like it because true she never live with him she feel him musn't ask her nutten. Him used to even take care of her daughter and treat her good but she only deh wid him for money. Now if she asks him he may say yes come and then when she goes him will give her a story why she can't get the money*

Social risks include partnerships breaking down, and thus potentially losing social, economic and emotional support. Data indicate that women navigate a fine line between maintaining multiple partnerships ('butterfly around'), while trying to their maintain status as a primary partner, and keeping options open.

Multiple partnerships are clearly seen as a way of achieving economic security, but they also introduce women to the risk of being unable to identify the paternity of their child. Such women are negatively portrayed in stories and are ultimately unable to secure support from their child's father if they can not identify him or he will not accept the child.

Additionally, engaging in multiple partnerships means that women risk gaining a negative reputation in the community (as a 'skettel' or 'whore'), perhaps as a result of gossip. This may result in diminished access to a variety of social resources or means of support.

Predictably many of the stories describe a degree of physical risk in relationships with men. There are many stories of intimate partner violence, beating and rape. In the narratives, violence against women is often talked about as if it is 'to be expected' and unremarkable. The only instances in which it is highlighted in stories are when violence is meted out in public ('embarrass her on the street', 'beat her on the road'), or when serious injury occurs ('break her hand and foot'), after which the beatings can no longer remain private. Community members are often reported to advise or intervene, but a certain level of violence is accepted or tolerated in some stories before action is taken.

*The mother knew what he was doing and tried to tell her to move out because she was tired of hearing him beat her since she always can hear it from her house. He put her out. Somebody tell her she is too much of a nice girl to talk to him cause all he does is batter bruise her.*

'Having too much sex' (with too many people) is another risk of multiple partnerships, discussed as 'wearing women out' and making them look old. Women are aware of the limited window of opportunity that their youth and sexuality provide.

*Work out dem self by having sex wid every man and run up and down like prostitute.*

Women in inner city areas inevitably risk being affected by street and gang violence. Relationships with men with money or men involved in the 'garrison' system or drugs trade are inherently risky (though potentially offer high rewards):

*Mostly they love drugs man, the young girls like drugs man, they make money fast- and every day. If they go with a drugs man, they can get money everyday. Every day.*

*Girl find this nice young guy who she could start her life with him always tell her to do good things and get a job, he tell her he love her at first sight and don't want to lose her. This girl start a relationship and a couple days after she frowns he was a gunman he started to want to rule her life and tell her to do bad things on the street, she would frowns and don't do it and he would beat her up and do her bad things like gun butt her in her head kick her beat her. She wants to leave him but she can't because he is a bad man and she is afraid of him.*

Perceived risks of STIs and HIV are discussed later, but it is worth noting that the majority of risks discussed in PEER stories relate to violence and social status, rather than risks to sexual health. As one among many managed risks, STIs and HIV are often poorly understood, and compared with immediate and tangible threats, HIV is seen as an abstract concept.

In summary, young women tread a fine line between maximising the potential benefits (economic, fun, pleasure) of their youth, sexuality, attractiveness, and fertility within their relationships with men, with the risks that this might entail. If girls go 'too far' they feel they risk rape, diseases, men 'bailing out' on them, and being seen as a skettel. In some ways young women are relatively powerful in managing their relationships with men, but they are also vulnerable, and their choice of livelihood strategies is limited.

#### **7.4 Transactional Partnerships**

It is difficult to separate discussion of multiple partnerships from that of transactional partnerships. The importance of an exchange component to relationships is consistently clear in the narratives. Even the most abstract and romantic discussions of ideal relationships involve gift giving and economic security.

*Some of them say they have different guys for different things. One help pay the bills, one help with the children and one to have sex with. The others want to have sex with her but she is a one man person so she gives them different stories so she doesn't have to have sex with them. Every time the one that paying bills come around she will say she has her period or she is sick. The one she has sex with is her main boyfriend and he helps with the children to even if it's not his children.*

Many of the stories indicate women having sex for basic necessities, including money for school fees, baby food, bus fares and taxi rides. 'Lunch money' is also frequently mentioned, which is also a euphemism for basic maintenance.

Some women experience social pressure to resolve economic hardship through transactional relationships. Others are not dissuaded from engaging in such relationships by their mothers, who 'let them get on with it'. Women are seen as having responsibility for securing resources for both themselves, their children and in many case their wider families. The narratives provide many examples of social pressure on women to fulfil all these roles, often explicitly though transactional relationships.

*This guy come live nearby them and he see and like the girl, she doesn't really want him because she love the baby-father although him never usually give her anything. She will get up in the morning and boil hot water alone for the baby that's all she have. People start to encourage her fe deal wid the other guy because him have money.*

*This girl stop going to school. She don't work, she just tek any type of man. The mother don't even say anything. She eventually have a baby. The mother tell her that she must let him mine her, she must not bother to work, no mek him tell you bout no work.*

*A father let his daughter talk to a man because he has four children and his pay doesn't support all of the family so he makes the daughter talk to his friend for the money. He is a single parent. He still tries to protect her but he makes her do it because he needs the money. Once something seems like it is going wrong he will try to get her out of it.*

There is some evidence that male partners acknowledge or even accept external transactional partnerships, for example:

*Some people would say, some of them love it when their woman goes out and comes back in with money or food, and they don't even know where it came from [their girlfriend is seeing someone else, getting goods from them, and their boyfriend doesn't care because they just want the goods she has come home with]. Some men just love sweets [goods the girl is bringing home]. Some men, anytime they see you with money, they ask you where you got it from, and it wasn't them who gave it to you. They don't like that, because they know that they didn't give it to you, so they want to know where it came from, **those are real men.***

Thus young women represent a source of capital not just to themselves but to their family, and even their male partners. The data suggest that families may exert pressure on women to identify a partner who can at least support her such that she can also help her family. Relationships with different men thus form a very complex support network for women and the other parties who have a vested interest in her relationships.

*Family say if you're looking for a boyfriend, choose one who can at least help you, buy a little thing, help me with money for cooking. Just to help you with your lunch money etc.*

*She walks and tells everybody about her sugar daddy that's mining (caring for) and she loves him. She put on his name on her skin because she loves him and her mother tells her that she must not leave him because he is taking care of the family so she must not make that mistake.*

As Jamaica has high levels of youthful childbearing, young women are likely to have relatively young mothers themselves, and may not have a father figure at home. Their mothers may well have a similar lifestyle to the young women in the study. Discussions of family pressure to develop relationships with older men must therefore be understood in this context, in which there is a likelihood of the wider family also participating in intergenerational transactional relationships.

### **7.5 Social Status**

The following narratives describe a dual motivation for young women to have transactional relationships: that wealthier men promise both material reward and social status:

*These girls can't keep one man and want everybody. They feel they hot and want the clothes, the shoes and everything. Is a competition in the ghetto, who first get what and who have how much of this and how much of that so them look more than the next person.*

*They want money to go to school or buy food and to give them next man because they want to give the man they love the money or because they want to feel big, to show off their man on other girls and show off on other girls that they get money to give their man and because they want their man to look good and they feel good knowing they gave their man money so he can look good.*

*A big man fi hype you up [make you hype]*

*'Some parents don't have it to help [their daughters], so they say the young boy don't have money, so they look to big man that have money, and drive the most expensive car, and have hot money, and live in a big house up in the hills. So they don't want anybody that can't help them. **So they talk to big man fi hype them up**, so they can wear hype things and drive in hype car so everybody can see her in her name brand'*

Young women's appearances need constant updating and maintenance: hair, clothes, and nails are all required to look good, in order to continue attracting attention, and maintaining or improving one's position in the community:

*When she use to go a school, she know this girl, har friend dem rich you know, but through she poor. Dem have whole heap a things, but through she nuh have any, so dem a boost har and tell har sey, if anything she want she a fi get it, if she par with dem, anything she want*

*she have to get it, if you come in a our click. So from she left school, she just start look older man and sell har body fi get money to buy pretty clothes, new clothes, blue phone, everything that she si dem have.*

*And mi ask har what do people say about young girls talking to a lot of men, well, she sey the people dem would a sey, the young girls dem whey talk to whole heap a man, dem a bitch. Everything dem si dem want. So mi sey why mek dem stay so, she sey well, some people would a sey dem si dem enemy wid something and dem like it and dem want it, so dem go talk to a lot of man dem just fi show off. So mi sey what kind a things dem want, so she sey, well the girl dem whey she know, dem want the latest hair style, the latest clothes, shoes and dem nails fi do every week.*

Women discuss their social status as also being linked to their reputation as a good sexual partner, in terms of their relationship with the *man pon the side*, indicating that gossip provides both risks and opportunities (gossip is required in order for her reputation to be spread as a good sexual partner). While rumours can cause strife and ‘relationship mash up’, they also provide opportunities for new relationships with men attracted by a woman’s reputation. In the analysis workshops, young women expressed a clear desire to be known as a good sexual partner. There were also stories reflecting the fear of a poor reputation, ‘*Some will disgrace you and say your vagina don’t please them.*’

## **7.6 Pressure from Men**

Although the preceding discussion has described how young women actively engage in varied relationships with men for different purposes, women do not always deliberately seek out such relationships. The social environment described in the narratives is characterised by persistent men who pressurise or persuade women to have sex with them. Peer researchers report stories of men following women around in their cars, offering lifts, shouting to them, or approaching them through their family. Thus young women do not need to deliberately seek out transactional sex. Peer researchers feel that in many cases, older men exploit the fact that women in inner city communities are in often desperate need of money.

*If there is a good looking girl in the house, then you’ll already have the big men coming around, if they know the family needs money. And they have what the woman wants: money, clothes*

*This girl was quite stubborn and could resist the older man, but some girls would eventually relent under men’s persistence, if they just kept asking and asking her.*

## **7.7 Commercial Sex Work and Transactional Sex**

Even in ‘romantic’ love relationships, stories showed that material exchanges are an important part: ‘*courting is facing a commitment, taking out, buying*

*dinner and buying flowers*'. The narratives contain hundreds of references to having sex for money or gifts. A small number talk of women '*selling their body*', and this is seen as a distinctly different activity to that of women routinely engaging in transactional sexual partnerships, even though it might be difficult for an outsider to distinguish the two activities. However, there are many differences between prostitution and other forms of commercial sex (e.g. delayed rather than immediate exchange, the degree of attachment in the relationship). The following story is illustrative, describing how if a young woman did what she was doing in the sex work district of New Kingston, it would be seen as prostitution, but as she is sleeping with different men as 'boyfriends', it is not seen as such:

*Her baby-father is 30 plus and she is 21 this year. The man them usually older than her and she don't want no young guy she prefer older men. She have to work hard for her mother, some of her friends do prostitution. **People would say what she do is prostitution but is just dat she not in New Kingston** because she sleep with the different man dem. She says she have to have different man because if one man gone the next one will foot the bill. She sleep with all of them and she go visit them and have the relationship like real relationship and **call all of them her boyfriend**. Dem don't know dat she have next boyfriend.*

The important point is whether women see themselves as prostitutes, and it seems that the vast majority of women engaged in transactional sexual relationships do not.

## 8 Partnerships with Older Men

Given the characteristics of sexual networking discussed above it is unsurprising that many of women's partnership aspirations are fulfilled by older men, who are often preferred partners for young women. The PEER data provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of this phenomenon. Older men's greater wealth is only one of a number of important motivating factors, not least the lack of opportunities presented by relationships with men of their own age.

*She said the young boy only want sex and not giving her anything in return. She said him can't help her out. If yuh hungry him can't give you nutten fi eat cause him a guh she him hungry too.*

*The old man can give them what dem want and the young boy can't give them, especially money: school boy lunch money done 12 o'clock.*

In the narratives, the women provide a clear description of the relative merits of older compared with younger men. These range from being cared for in the absence of parental care, to being taken shopping. The extent to which the role of these older men is seen as paternalistic (described as bringing lunch to a school girl) is striking:

*The man is old enough to be them father and some a dem want someone to tek care a dem. Why do they talk to older man because the older man give them money whenever they want and the older man take them shopping and the younger boys don't. Younger boys do not have enough money and they will not take them shopping and them not giving them their money. Younger boys don't have any money because them not working.*

*A girl always talks that a big man she want and no little youth. While going to school she was beautiful and lots of guys want her but she would say she want a big man. At lunch time her big man would carry her lunch to school. Some kids would stop and look. She says the kids would think in their mind that she deh a school and a gwaan suh imagine if she deh at her yard what she woulda duh. Sometimes she would come school and brag what he gave her. Her mother knows about him and likes him because he can support the family.*

*They talk to older men because of needs and wants, because their parents don't really have it to take care of them so they look for somebody who can help take care of their mother and take care of certain business (school, food, e.g. if 5 live in the house and they have one bed then they will buy other beds, if the need a fan or anything like that).*

Older men provide access to new experiences, often out of the inner city:

*The older man can send her to hair dresser, buy her pretty clothes, carry her to dinner and places she never been before.*

The fun of partying and meeting different men also appears elsewhere in the narratives.

*They love to have different man at the same time because they can go different places see different faces and have different experiences.*

*Know this girl she have all kinds of different man she say she love it because she get different experience go different places she love the life she is living.*

Older men are perceived as more mature and less volatile than younger men. Young women are thought to mature at a younger age than men and thus enjoy relationships with more responsible partners:

*People would say older men are more responsible more experienced and can please them in many ways than a man their own age. Some would find their own age group though they would say age is just a number. Older men would treat them good physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally.*

*A girl was talking to an older man and he would give her everything and anything that she wants. The older men are more responsible than the younger ones. The younger men say they don't have it – some of them are not working, they just sit on the roadside, the older men they work ad they make use of themselves. The younger men just sit on the roadside and smoke and drink and gamble.*

*Some would say the young girls se it is better off to talk to an older man than to talk to a careless boy on the road who just want to beat you everyday some of them would the big man dem naaw beat you up dem a tek care a you.*

*Some would say its better for them to talk to older man because older man stand up to their responsibility and influence them to do good things. She love him or she is looking a security, some would say older man own up to their responsibility and always be there.*

*Most a de young guy dem a look fe sex them naaw look somebody fe settle down wid, dem no have no good encouragement to give them only want to get the girl pregnant so them can boast to them friend how much children them have.*

*Girls mature faster than boys so some things she understand the boy don't understand so she can talk to the big man and he will understand while the boy act childish. The old man can give them what dem want and the young boy can't give them especially money (school boy lunch money done 12 o'clock).*

There is a widely shared normative storyline circulating among young women about achieving their fortune through relationships with older men. The following story suggests that 'big men' do not always deliver all that women hope from them. The woman concerned prefers younger men and reverts back to a relationship with someone younger after getting what she needs:

*This young girl was about 24 or 25, but she talks to a lot of young guys. She have two kids for two different guys. The boy's father is in jail and the girl's father died, but she meet this older man big belly fat man who drive a MarkII, live over Portmore, she live in the ghetto but the man love her and him build this big hell of a house fe har, wid veranda and she grill up. She never really de pon anything but the man come in har life and change round everything. She mek a whole a money out a him and he was engaged to her and people se she have a lot of money out a him, and when she even just run him he still come back and bring her allowance so at that time she was still getting. Now she stop and cut him off completely and now she living with a young guy.*

In other stories it is young girls who are manipulated by the older men, and do not realise that they are being 'used' for sex:

*This girl had two boyfriends, a schoolboy and an older man. The school boy really liked her and wished that they would stay together forever but she had the big man that would give her everything she wanted as long as she gave him sex for it. If she didn't give him sex he wouldn't give her anything so she realized that it was just for sex. So she wanted back the school boy and started to show him more attention but he was long gone.*

*A sugar daddy dem want. The old man nuh want dem a something him a look. The old man would give the young girl everything while the young man can't give her what she wants. The old man looking sex and nutten more and they use the young girls. Old man think young girl easy so he would tell 'me will give you money for this and that' because him know him can use money and catch her.*

*The young girls head light so that mean anything the man tell dem must do them do it just because them want the money. Dem can't be wife material because a next man will offer money to them and them will do anything for that man to.*

There are a number of references to older men helping to secure women's future, both by paying for them to attend school, and assisting in life beyond school. The narratives illustrate the clear determination of women to improve their lives, but also a perception of the limited opportunities available to them:

*A friend she is just 16 and the man is 31 years old and he send her to a evening class he would always make sure that she is okay he is much older he is such a nice man. This girl is so young and she is talking*

*older man he would guide her in every way he would guide her and tell her to hold up her head and be smart.*

*Sometimes he is more mature, he is working, if the girl live on her own the man will help her pay the rent. If she get pregnant he will be more willing to provide for the child or more likely to provide some place for the girl if her parents decide fe throw her out. You can hardly find a young man talking to a young girl who is going to spend his money to send her back to school but the older man would be quicker to do that especially if he loves her.*

The majority of the stories discussed amongst women describe them using their sexuality to gain access to resources for both necessity and pleasure. Some narratives also give an insight into the power inequality inherent in these relationships. In the following story, a young girl feels obliged to provide whatever an older man wants, because he had provided for her from a young age:

*There is a girl the man growing her from she very young and he turned to her and say when she grow older she have to deh wid him because him always a give him tings. The girl said nutten don't wrong because he was giving him tings but the friend said it was wrong because she was under age and she should be up to it. But the girl never cared because she say her mother don't have it, her father doesn't have it and anything she wants she can call him (the older man) and get it.*

## 9 Trust

Trust is a key issue for young women in both their friendships and sexual partnerships. The dictionary definition of trust is relying upon someone, or placing confidence in them, while confidently expecting that they will not knowingly hurt you by breaking expectations that you have of them. This concept of trust is evident in the data, and it is also clear that expectations people have of their partners reflect the reality of multiple partnerships and complex social relationships in the inner-city. It is more important to publicly perform or demonstrate signs of trust in a relationship, than to consistently comply with behaviours associated with trust on the surface, such as honesty and fidelity.

Having confidence in one's friends is hugely important, and risks of confiding in friends, or getting too close to people, are frequently discussed. Stories illustrate a high degree of anxiety around friends betraying confidences. Good friends are inevitably described as those you could trust, while bad friends talk about you behind your back. Some women speak of there being no such thing as a good friend, because they would all break confidences and gossip about you. Rumours resulting from these betrayals can have serious consequences.

*She sey she know a girl who she did feel sey a her friend, she use to talk to her every minute and tell her things, you know deep secret. Some people a find out sey da gal deh a nuh one good girl she a par wid. But she never sey anything. So she still a tell her, her secret, only to find out sey she a tell other people her business, until people start trouble her and a cus her, and she a sey a she alone she tell, not even mi sister dem mi tell, so how come other people know dem something deh. So a she a tell people her business, so that other people in a di community hear and a run her and fling stone after her and dem something dey.*

Trust is not necessarily a straightforward, positive quality. People can be fooled into trusting others, which left them vulnerable: *'trust is a wicked word'*.

*Some would say they won't trust anybody. They don't want to trust anyone because each time they open up to trust someone they get hurt because they trust the wrong set of people like somebody you share everything with and tell your deepest secret and hear it back all over the community.*

*Who would they go to, if they get in trouble?  
[Some] people say nobody at all, because they don't trust anyone, they don't tell anybody their business because they will scandal them... by telling everybody, so they can look down on them.*

Yet in spite of this, trust is clearly valued and sought after in relationships, especially with the primary partner. Women do not expect to give or receive trust with sexual partners other than the primary partner, and in other

relationships, thinly disguised mutual manipulation and dishonesty is the expected norm.

### *9.1 Trust and the Primary Partner*

Although the majority of stories concerning trust are about trust breaking down, rather than trust building up, it is clear that ideally, women have one partner who they expect to trust and be honest with.

*You know when you can trust your partner when you start falling in love.*

*Trust and respect go a far way. This is what makes the relationship last. Trust is the foundation on which every relationship is built because from the person is trusting then the other is trusting so they will both think that the other is not cheating so the relationship will last longer.*

The typical stylized description of 'nice guys to have a relationship with' would be along the lines of:

*To have fun they go out together, beach on Sundays, movies, play together, run jokes with each other. On Sundays beach is nice go in water together run around on beach and play with each other and swim together. Eat fish and bammy, go on donkey ride, dance, hold hand, walk around, go on boat ride. Communication with each other, make love and have fun, go out and have fun together.*

However, there is a disjuncture between this unrealistic, romantic view of the 'ideal' relationship, and how trust in relationships worked in the gritty reality of stories told. Such a man might be rich, and give you everything you want, but many stories reveal that the 'nice guy' might not give women enough space, and be seen as 'soft' and clingy. He might follow his woman jealously, behaviour which peer researchers cannot countenance in a man. In functional terms, if women are trying to manage a large and complicated social network, they do not want a primary partner who keeps them under close supervision.

In reality, trust in sexual partnerships is not about sticking to universally agreed norms, such as fidelity: the standards expected in relationships vary. Trust is about coming to mutually agreed standards: 'Standards you set he wouldn't break them'. Trust is associated with an emotional state closer to 'wanting to trust someone' and performing behaviours to demonstrate trust (showing a payslip, not wearing a condom) than achieving in-depth knowledge and understanding of one's partner.

A common component of women trusting men is trusting them not to hurt or humiliate them publicly ('beat them in the road'). This includes not flaunting additional partners:

*The two of them just show respect for each other. He not carrying another girl in front of her face. She worse not going to carry a next guy in front of him.*

Trust is closely linked to 'respect', in that trust is about having confidence that one's primary partner will not disrespect them. One of the worst ways of disrespecting someone is to do so in the public domain, where other people can see or hear what is going on.

Honesty with their primary partner is a clear requirement for some women: both partners should 'come clean wid eveything'. Trust is closely aligned with perceived honesty, with more honesty creating greater trust. This sort of honesty is inferred when people tell their partner 'every little thing', especially if they receive attention from other people:

*This guy with his girlfriend, a brown skinned straight nose Indian hair, so there are girls a look him and he will come in and tell her and she would go and argue with the girl and tell her to leave her man alone.*

Women also expect that their partner will not gossip about them and reveal personal or sexual information about them to their friends:

*The boy would talk about both of [his girlfriends] in dirty ways behind their backs on the corner with his friends, so when his friends saw them they would laugh.*

Apart from in extreme circumstances, men cannot accept their primary partner to have other sexual partners. The exceptional cases are in stories in which men tolerate, or even encourage their partner's involvement with other men providing he receives some of the material gains that his woman is getting from the relationship (cash or gifts).

*Sometimes the personal man knows [about the sugar daddy], and if he isn't jealous, he will ask her for some of the things she gets from the sugar daddy.*

The other instances are when men who are unable to provide for their women have to tacitly accept their partner looking elsewhere. Men know that women expect them to provide financial support, and it seems that female fidelity is a privilege that men must earn by providing this support. Many stories reflect a perception that there is widespread fear among men that their partner is unfaithful. Men are concerned about trust too: for 'wife material', men are said to want a woman who 'keeps one man'. Yet men must be aware of the prevailing social climate in which men compete for women using gifts, cars and their looks, and in which they can probably quite legitimately fear their girlfriend to have other partners. Women discuss the many ways in which women convince (or deceive) their partners they do not have anyone else:

*He friend's baby-father doesn't live with her but when the sugar daddy comes around she gives the baby-father the child and she parties with the sugar daddy. She gets money from the sugar daddy to support herself and the child. She will tell the baby-father that she is going clubbing with her friends.*

There are stories in which men's inability to trust their partner led to them following their woman around everywhere, or effectively imprisoning her in their home: 'dem lock up in a house like rat, and dem get whole heap a beating'. In these cases men are dismissed as 'disgusting', or 'fools', and their behaviour is thought to be unacceptable.

*Have some man who doesn't want the woman to go anywhere unless is him a bring her out, have some boring man who don't want another man to look at his woman or talk to his woman or else he will beat her very bad. Man say any how a next man no call to him woman, him no feel good, the way how him woman look good, man haffi look pon her. It no up to him; she must know wha she a do 'cause him can stop her some man trail the woman, go everywhere, she don't even know se him a follow her. Some people will see and se watch de da man de a trail him woman. Some man se dem naw do dat for them a no pimp.*

Young women are presumed to be especially flighty and unfaithful. They are presumed to be easily led and motivated mainly by money:

*The young girls' head light, so that mean anything the man tell dem must do, them do it just because them want the money. Dem can't be wife material because a next man will offer money to them and them will do anything for that man too. She will gi weh di tings (give a next man sex for money, cheat on him for money).*

If women are suspected of being unfaithful, or are found to have been unfaithful, they risk violence, the end of their primary relationship, and possibly homelessness.

*And she sey people sey trust and respect is a must in a relationship because if there is no trust, the relationship would be war and problem. So mi sey what you mean by war and problem. She sey well some people would sey dat if he or she don't trust you and they go out on the road and hear something, they don't come and ask you, they just cuss and start to fight you.*

Although it goes against the romantic ideal that women often speak of, the majority of stories show that they accepted and tolerate their primary partners' infidelity, within limits. There are, however, some stories about women who do not tolerate male infidelity (though they usually tolerate it for some time before giving up):

*A guy lives in a community every minute you see him with different women. He lives with his girlfriend so when she goes to work he will bring in a woman. When she comes home the other people in the yard will tell her that he had a woman in the house and she will try to ignore it but whenever she goes on the road the other women he has will throw word on her. So she left him because she says she can't trust him because him have a lot of women.*

In reality, economic dependence on men may mean that women have limited ability to insist on their man's fidelity. However, there is agreement that if men do have another woman, they should keep it quiet, or conduct the relationship at a distance.

*There are men who will have another woman, but not going to be seen with her around the other girl and start a war with he, and that shows respect... They keep it down, they not going to publish it.*

*Then she found out that he was seeing a girl at a bar and they start to cuss and carry on and because she found out that he is in a relationship with someone at the bar and wonder why he couldn't find somebody far away and not somebody she knows. So she decided not to have sex with him and he got vex.*

*This woman and her husband, she is Christian, he is not, normally he is a nice guy to her, you don't see any woman come at his gate and call hi and yet him have a lot of woman but him respect her, don't think him eat at anyone else home and he always sleep at home and he is not ill treating her. He has a car and takes her where she want to go.*

This husband is respecting his wife by keeping his affairs private and doing the other important things a husband is meant to do, such as not eating at his other women's houses, and always sleeping at home.

In cases where male infidelity is suspected, there are several stories in which the woman does not say anything, but rather *does* something to indicate their suspicion. For instance, asks to use a condom, or in this case, withholding domestic services:

*She became suspicious and didn't say anything or confront him she just get up don't wash for him, cook or do anything. So he got vex and start to quarrel and ask why she doesn't wash or cook and she says mek one of yuh skettel and careless girl do it.*

There is some pessimism about being able to find the ideal trusting relationship:

*The nice guy already taken or no nice guy nuh deh again. Men are nothing but liars, tricksters or players (have many women, not into commitment). If a girl meets a young man who she think was a nice guy but it turned out not to be so, she wouldn't let her guard down or she would start to play man (cheat, use men for money) or go on the other side (become a lesbian).*

*You have this woman and her husband married seven years and living loving as a couple. The man makes her feel like she should trust him and respect him. No one can tell her anything and she believes. He will go to work but every spare time he would be with her. One day she*

*went to the doctor for an appointment where she saw him and another woman at the doctor's office. The other woman was pregnant. His wife couldn't believe. They went home and he explained himself. She they took a long time to talk it over. The trust and respect is hardly there for him now.*

There are many stories of people who are convinced that their partner is completely honest yet he turns out to have other women or other children. Many women are sympathetic to the idea that one can never really know whether one's partner is being completely honest.

## **9.2 Function of Trust**

Trust is very important for the security of relationships. Relationships operate in a climate of threatening gossip: many stories reflect the problem of people gossiping about men or women being seen with other people. In fact trust is often defined as being when a partner does not believe rumours they have heard about you. Trust is required in relationships if they are to withstand the pressures that this sort of gossip produces.

*Good to have trust and love in a relationship because when you love and trust the relationship will be good so you don't have to worry about the other person doing anything to hurt you. If somebody tells something to the other person they won't believe it because they trust that much.*

*Sometimes you have two lovers going good and then – Bap! Somebody just comes from out of the blue moon and start to tell one of the partners lies and they believe the person so trust and everything included changes, and changes come in right there, that's why people always say never listen to news carriers because they can break up a great relationship.*

Trust is therefore not just a nice aspect of relationships and something that one can vaguely hope for. Trust is essential for maintaining relationships, withstanding pressures, maintaining a sense of self-worth and not being publicly humiliated. Issues such as condom use which are so closely associated with trust therefore have huge implications for relationships.

The widespread fear of gossip, and friends or sexual partners breaking confidences, has implications for sexual behaviour change efforts. These fears about friends and sexual partners betraying their confidence may contribute to young women being less willing to adopt behaviours that are seen as abnormal or not widely accepted among their peers. A behaviour has to become 'normal' for someone to be able to practice it without fear of gossip, but as we shall discuss in the next section, condom use with the primary partner is not seen as normal. Thus men or women who initiate this behaviour risk being talked about and judged by more people than just their partner if they cannot trust their partner to remain discreet. The influence of peers' and partners' norms is strong, and young women who swim against the tide of popular opinion risk public ridicule or isolation.

## 10 HIV and AIDS

This section explores how beliefs, attitudes and stories circulating around the community about HIV infection and AIDS may impact on individuals' behaviour. It is assumed that the target audience make reference to such stories and beliefs to judge their own degree of risk, and behave accordingly if circumstances allow.

### *10.1 Knowledge and Understanding*

Knowledge and understanding about HIV is variable, and correct beliefs are typically mixed in with incorrect beliefs, such as that AIDS made people smell badly. Some participants know many important features of HIV and AIDS: that one can be infected for many years without symptoms, and that drugs are available to prolong life, but that there is no cure for HIV. There is some concept of positive living: the importance of a healthy diet, social support etc. Other incorrect beliefs were voiced during the peer researcher analysis workshop, when several participants said that they did not think that HIV could be transmitted during one sexual encounter. An illustrative selection of knowledge about HIV is as follows:

*Some say they don't want to get infected because there is no cure and it's a deadly virus. Some it is a disgraceful disease because it makes you lose a lot of weight, have a bad smell from your private parts, gives you spots on the skin and lets your hair fall off. Some say it break up the relationship with friends because they show no love, disgrace their name around and scorn them. Some say it is a man made disease.*

*If they have AIDS they would probably move from where they live, AIDS make your bones feel weak it makes you smell you have a discharge with a palish look; HIV can stay up to 10 years before you find out; if it stay that long you going to get worse.*

*AIDS is a virus that can be treated but not be cured. It is a deadly disease. One can normally catch it by sexual intercourse, sharing needles like drug addicts. There is no drug to prevent it. The drugs (treatment) are expensive. People who catch the disease become weak, sores come up on their skin and they have a discharge from the vagina that smell very bad and some people lose weight.*

These findings suggest that the widespread information campaigns in Jamaica have had an effect, as people speak 'authoritatively' and confidently on the subject, feeling as though they are fully informed about HIV and AIDS. However, the data suggest that a great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding remains, which is perhaps particularly dangerous when people believe that they are in full possession of the facts. Any national HIV information, communication and education efforts have to compete with the large volume of 'street talk' of the kind gathered during this PEER research, and these stories about HIV, however implausible they may seem, gain credibility by virtue of them supposedly 'having happened to someone'.

## 10.2 Risk Perception

Stories about condom use and HIV reveal a variety of strategies that people use to judge the likelihood of their sexual partner being HIV positive or infected with another STI. One such strategy is judging one's sexual partner during foreplay, checking their skin, or using touch, intuition, or gut instinct. During the analysis workshop, the peer researchers elaborated on how the 'gut instinct' worked, explaining how they knew of men who had been just about to have sex with women, until 'their nature cut' – they lost all sexual desire and 'just knew' that they should not have sex with this woman. They described how the men were subsequently vindicated by finding out that the woman had, in fact, got other boyfriends or a disease. Many stories also tell of people believing they can tell whether their partner had been unfaithful according to how they 'feel' during sex.

*There was a couple who said never used a condom from they start having sex but the boy would go outside and cheat on the girl and the girl would ask and he would deny it. The girl said she would know because he had a funny feeling whenever he came back to her.*

*There was a boy who had a lot of girlfriends and his friend would ask if he used condoms and he would say yes but not with his personal girl. He asked why and he said because he loves and trusts her and he knows she wouldn't cheat on him. His friends asked how he was sure of that and he said because he knows how it (her vagina) feels and it always feels the same way.*

Condom use might prevent people from perceiving these changes:

*They want to feel the person means, when they have on a condom they don't feel everything and if the person cheats on them they can know because the person comes with a different feeling (just a different feeling she can't explain)*

A person's social (rather than specifically their sexual) background and their current sexual behaviour are also considered when assessing sexual risk. The fact that a partner may have been infected in the past did not seem to be given much consideration, or perhaps people deny this possibility to themselves as being too difficult to manage. Knowing a person's background, family and current sexual behaviour is thought to give an insight into the potential risk involved in sleeping with them. The following story shows that women think that a man's background should be considered at least before sleeping with him:

*There was a girl who believed that a guy who is spending his money on her deserves something in return. So she went to bed with the guy not knowing his background or anything about him. Months after she started having belly problem, feeling weak and drowsy. She decided to go to the doctor. She then was asked to do a blood test when she found out that she was HIV positive. At that point of her life everything*

*changed. The man that transmitted the disease has migrated to another country. Family and friends start scorning her. Her skin was full of sores and she never knew what to do so she hung herself.*

The stereotypes of HIV positive people apparent in the data are likely to be the same sorts of stereotypes that young people judge their own partners against when considering HIV risk. The vast majority of stories of HIV positive people portray them as people with high risk behaviour, such as promiscuous young women, prostitutes, drug addicts and taxi drivers. One of the commonest stories told is of 'bad things happening to bad girls'. These are typically young women who sleep with a lot of men, go to clubs, and smoke and drink alcohol, almost inevitably ending up raped, HIV positive, or both:

*There is a girl in the community who has a lot of man. Every night she bring a different man home, One night she and her friends went to the club and met a guy and she took him home but she never knew he had AIDS. One day she went back to the club with her friends and she asked the bartender for the man and the bartender said he died from AIDS. She ran out of the club and went home and started to drink a lot of liquor and start to smoke and cry saying wah dis she go tek up on herself. Everybody said she tek too much that is why she caught AIDS.*

In the narratives, such young women have often ignored advice from elders or their mothers. Importantly the narratives reflect the extent to which women perceive mothers to be central role models.

*Know someone who have a friend with a lot of man, she will go out one and by the time she reach back another one call her and she go with him. Her mom talk to her and she would say to her mom that she don't want no one to tell her what she must do with her life till two years after she found out she have HIV and none of the man don't stand by her side she cry a lot and said if she did just listen to her mom that wouldn't happen to her and couple years after she died.*

Similarly, men lacking morals feature in many stories about HIV, and almost universally experience rapid decline into social isolation:

*There was a man who had a lot of money and a lot of girls. He lived a very extravagant life. He treated his family bad. He was with a girl but he never wanted her. The relationship went on for a while and then he went to America. He came back to Jamaica after a period of time. When he returned he came with the disease but he didn't know. He still had all the girls he had before he left. After a while he fell sick and went to the doctor and found out he had the disease. He started losing weight, his skin began to change like was becoming thick and sticking to his body, When the rumour broke out and more people started to find out that he had the disease, he went into isolation and hiding. Everybody started to scorn him. Nobody wanted to touch him or allow him to touch them. He tried to get treatment but didn't have enough money. When person bring food to give him they would stay far and*

*throw it to him. Because he was weak he couldn't get up and reach it. He stayed there and died from starvation and ants started eating at his mouth.*

In addition to these scenarios of 'obvious' high risk, where everyone apart from the central character can see what is coming to them, there is also the occasional story of 'innocent victims': devoted wives who think they have happy marriages only to find out that their husband has been unfaithful and infected them. It is considered surprising if Christians (practicing Christians as opposed to 'church goers') are HIV positive, but these stories show that people recognise that even in low risk situations, infection can, and does, happen.

*There is a lady in the community... she has a man she is not married to and living with him for years. The man is a Christian and she is too. She never know that the man had a lot of girls. She never expect that he would have young girls or other woman on the side. The way they lived so good and he went from work to the yard. He got sick and they took him to hospital and he died a few minutes after they cook him there. The autopsy show that he died from AIDS. The lady start to fret that maybe she has AIDS. She did a test and found out that she has it. She started to cry and pray to God to ask him how come this happen and all she does is live her life for him.*

### **10.3 HIV Testing**

Beliefs in ability to detect the virus, and stereotypes associated with HIV positive people, represent a local risk assessment framework. If individuals do not feel vulnerable to infection within this framework, they are not likely to be motivated to be tested. But even if they do feel vulnerable, there is an additional reason why people might not get tested. There are many stories describing the rapid decline of people after diagnosis with HIV. Those who do not gain support or achieve some form of religious or social redemption are thought likely to die quickly after finding out their status, whether this is because of anxiety which hastens their illness, or because they are likely to commit suicide.

*There is a girl who found out she had the deadly virus and lived with it for a while. She decided that it is getting worse and her skin was full of black spots. She had a sister who had medication for chicken and went inside and stole it. She told people she went to the doctor and they said it was chicken pox. She used the medication and it wasn't working and decided to commit suicide. One morning her family went looking for her inside her house and saw her in the bed. They tried to wake her and she didn't respond. They found out that she was dead. They saw some medication beside her in her bed. They called madden to come for the body. They found from the autopsy out that she took tablets to kill herself.*

*There is no cure and they don't want to find out if they have it or they don't want to catch it. They say they don't want to find out if they have it because if they found out it would cause them to worry and you don't really get help with it (medication) and it will stress you out.*

These beliefs may reduce people's willingness to get tested, especially if they also worry about the cost of the necessary drugs for treatment. The cost of ARVs features as a major problem for many of the characters in the stories, and there are several stories of people dying after failing to afford their medication<sup>5</sup>. People with HIV are thought to need a lot of support from family members or the church to cope with their diagnosis.

#### ***10.4 Stigma and Blame***

The negative stereotypes of people affected by HIV and AIDS in the data demonstrate some of the behavioural and moral characteristics frequently associated with HIV. These associations contribute to the widespread stigmatisation of people living with HIV and AIDS, evident throughout the PEER data. Other ways in which this stigma is expressed is the way in which many HIV positive characters are described as withdrawing from public life ('she would not come on the road as she is ashamed of herself') and being treated badly in the community:

*It is best if they were dead because them don't want anyone to feel sorry for them, when people find out they treat you like a dog and some will be afraid of you.*

*There is a couple in the community who had the virus and they have a shop but people wouldn't buy certain things from them like bun and cheese only things in tin, bottle or biscuits in bag. One day someone said you know seh me go in the shop and see the man a pick him sore and me see a lady ask him for a tin of milk and the same hand me see him give her the tin of milk with. It spread in the whole community about him picking the sore in the shop and persons stopped buying from then they wouldn't buy anything at all until they had to close the shop.*

In addition, many stories feature HIV positive characters trying to find out who to blame for their infection, in order to get revenge or pass the blame on to someone else.

*There was a woman in the country, who found out she had AIDS, and she isn't allowed by her community to go into the local shops, and she can't tell who gave her AIDS because the man she thinks she caught it from got killed in a car crash.*

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<sup>5</sup> In August 2006, there was a Jamaican \$1000 a month fee, which has been reported to prevent some people from accessing ARVs ([www.panoscaribbean.org/productions/panoscope/2006-jamaica-plhiv.php](http://www.panoscaribbean.org/productions/panoscope/2006-jamaica-plhiv.php)). Charges were higher in the past which may have led to the belief that ARVs are very expensive.

Another common storyline focuses on malicious infection:

*This man about 3 weeks he found he have HIV so he started raping women and the people chase him out of the community so he go in the nearby gully and hid and still rape women when they pass at night. One night some guys dress up as girls and he chased the two of them and they run into a dark corner and stopped and when the man came around the corner they held him and cut of his head and dragged his body and threw it in a manhole.*

*Her uncle has the virus, and because he knows he has it, he started to walk and have sex with other people so they can catch it. One night when they couldn't find him, they heard he raped a little girl and the little girl's family came to the house and called the police and they came and locked him up. He got 12 years in prison because he was going around and infecting people.*

The melodramatic, ghoulish nature of stories about HIV infection and progression to AIDS diseases and death suggest that most people in the community are not familiar with the reality of the infection and its consequences.

*One day a girl was at her home and a cat ran over her foot and gave her a scar. She stayed home treating the foot herself. It got worse and she went to the doctor and her foot was taken off. People said it was obeah, She went home and had a break down and her hair was falling off. People on the street would say she had HIV. Her family took her to the doctor where they were told she had the virus and her baby was infected also.*

*Some people will fret (stress out themselves) when they find out they have it because they know they are going to die and also no one is there to show them love. Most AIDS and HIV victims end up begging on the streets and some start to get mad and start to eat dirty things.*

That these outlandish horror stories are circulating suggests that HIV is still seen as something quite removed from everyday life and experience.

Extreme stigmatisation is known to hamper prevention efforts, by reducing individuals' perceived susceptibility (few people can relate to the outrageous characters in the stories circulating), and because it discourages testing as people fear the negative social and physical consequences that they have heard about in numerous stories.

### **10.5 Condoms**

This section describes attitudes and behaviours reported around condom use, and explores why people used or did not use condoms. Preventing unwanted pregnancy and HIV/STD transmission are widely recognised benefits of using condoms. However, a range of factors are apparent which help explain why condom use is difficult or unwelcome, and why it has not been consistently

adopted in spite of high levels of awareness about HIV. There are confused opinions about condoms in the PEER data: they are described as both 'bad' and 'good', often depending on the specific context.

*It prevents pregnancy and diseases. It is good and bad. Good because it protect against disease and getting pregnant. Bad because it can burst, it gives some people infection and some people are allergic to it. If the condom burst you can get pregnant and catch disease like AIDS and STDs. Condoms are bad because they can't get in touch with their partner when they use condom, because the condom don't make them feel the real thing.*

The following section also describes how condom use is thought of in different contexts, especially with different partners or with the same partner over time. Brand awareness and perceptions are also discussed.

### **10.6 Condom Use in Different Contexts**

Protection from STIs and pregnancy are both cited as reasons for condom use. Avoiding diseases is discussed much more frequently than avoiding pregnancy, and the risks associated with diseases appear to be far more immediate and dangerous to young people than risks of pregnancy. Although there are two stories in the data about young women who become pregnant and end up in trouble (see quotation below), the vast majority of stories and opinions suggest that condom use is thought of primarily for preventing disease transmission.

*This young girl ma talk to this guy that pretty and have money so she want him fe herself and him tell her is she alone him have so them no haffi use no condom until him get her pregnant and start handle he like dog and him say him can't bother wid no baby right now because him want fe sport buy a heap of clothes and drink with him friend dem and baby a go put a stop to all a dat she have to struggle to find things for the baby.*

The fact that concern about diseases predominates over concern about pregnancy reflects several factors. Firstly, this is a community in which youthful pregnancy and childbirth is a routine, expected event. Young women may secure certain benefits and support from their partner and family by having a child, so even a pregnancy that is not strictly planned may not be unwelcome. Secondly, there are other methods of contraception which women can use if avoiding pregnancy is their main concern. This concern about diseases suggests that there is considerable motivation within the target population to avoid STDs in general, and not just HIV, as many stories discuss the unpleasant symptoms of other infections.

Condom use seems to be fairly acceptable the first time a couple has sex, with women often expecting their partner to wear a condom:

*Last year my friend went out with a guy she met to a club. When they enjoyed themselves and everything was over she only hear him ask*

*her if she going to have sex with him. She said she turned to him and said, 'my yute, me not just going to have sex with you just suh and is the first time'. So she turned to him and ask if he uses a condom normally and he said no. She said to him, 'I can't just give myself to you like that, and I just meet you without a condom.*

In addition, men might use condoms rather manipulatively at the start of the relationship as a way of gaining trust from women:

*The men buy the condoms because most times they want to impress the girls. They don't really want to use it but with a new girl they will use it so she will think that all the time they want to use a condom. They want to impress the girl that they want to protect her.*

This scenario, in which men seek to make a good first impression by using a condom, suggests that condom use in new sexual relationships has become a social norm to some extent, and that by using a condom in this context a man is signifying that he is protecting the woman. In this way, the condom has become a symbol of care and good intentions within the context of a new relationship.

Many stories have characters who recommend that people having what was perceived to be risky sex (unprotected sex outside the primary partnership) should wear a condom, suggesting that it is socially acceptable to wear a condom in 'risky' situations:

*This guy say him can bother wid de condom business cause when yu have on condom yu naw feel everything and him want fe go bare back wid de whole a fe him woman dem and him friend dem se no man you can do that you fe only have sex with yu bonafide girl without condom sometime and him a say no.*

Although the PEER data can not confirm the frequency of consistent condom use with new sexual partners, there is strong evidence that condom use has become widely accepted, socially sanctioned, and symbolic of positive attributes in this stage of a relationship or in casual relationships. This is good news for condom promotion, providing a foundation to build upon. However, attitudes towards condom use become much more varied and complicated in the next stages of a relationship, when consistent condom use appears to become the exception rather than the rule. There are some positive stories in which continued condom use in ongoing relationships which are said to show that a man 'respects' his partner. However in the majority of cases the reason for continued condom use is negative, and is usually because the woman cannot rely on her partner's fidelity:

*I know a girl who has a friend who said that any time she is going to have sex she uses a condom to protect herself because there are viruses around and she doesn't want to catch it. She says if they don't have a condom she won't do it even if is her bonafide boyfriend*

*because she doesn't know what he is doing outside and she says she loves the way she is.*

Condom use rarely stops because the couple have confirmed that neither are infected with HIV. In fact there are only two stories in which couples are tested for HIV before deciding not to use condoms:

*There was a young man who was having sex with a nice young lady and the condom fly off inside of her. He removed the condom himself. He admitted to his girlfriend that he is not a person who use condom so they went to the clinic to get tested and the results came out negative for both of them. After that they stopped using condoms.*

So why do couples who might have started off using condoms stop using them, even though their objective knowledge about each others' status has not changed?

### **10.7 Disincentives to Condom Use**

As previously mentioned, in the vast majority of cases, condom use stops if a relationship develops into a primary relationship, or once trust has been established. There is a strong social expectation that primary relationships are not the place for condom use, as opposed to other casual relationships. In fact, not using condoms is one of the defining characteristics of the primary relationship:

*The bonafide takes care of the money part and you will spend most of your time with him and you know his family and friends and he is the one you will have sex with without a condom.*

In spite of this, it is recognised that risks are still involved in having unprotected sex with the primary partner, as this story shows:

*The first time he saw her he fell in love with her, and she was the only girl he didn't want to use condoms on. The girl didn't like the idea of having sex without a condom. She fell in love with him and decided to have sex without a condom. The girl was having a terrible infection and she gave the man gonorrhoea.*

One should not assume that people always have unprotected sex out of ignorance, or a mistaken belief that they can judge whether their partner is infected (although it appears this also happens). Rather, one has to consider the fact that when looking at the world from the perspective of young women in Kingston, they face situations in which other behaviours (namely unprotected sex) quite rationally compete with condom use.

Trust can develop quickly, and is signified by factors such as meeting each others' friends and family, telling each another one another's daily activities, and regularly spending the night together. Although it is impossible to quantify the length and frequency of condom use with the PEER data, typical accounts

of when condom use stops suggest that it is after perhaps two weeks to one month, or even after having had sex once:

*[They] use condom on first date and after that it is strictly bare back because they are judging the person and say they are clean.*

If one partner within a primary partnership suggests condom use after this initial stage, this is strongly associated with mistrust.

*This girl in community, she don't like to use condom but she have a boyfriend she can't trust, and one day she tell me say she don't see her man fe about two weeks and he don't call her. So one Friday afternoon him go to the house and tell her say him was in the country and the phone never pick up. Them start to play and them him tell her, say him want have sex, and she tell him if him have condom, and him say no, so she say, 'no condom, no sex', so he went and got one.*

In this instance, rather than talk to her boyfriend about his suspected infidelity, the woman asks him to use a condom, showing how suggesting condom use might be seen as representing an accusation of infidelity. Mistrust can also work in the other direction: the other partner might see a request for condom use as a sign that she had been unfaithful to him. Such suspicions or accusations can threaten the relationship.

*[This girl is] always having problems with her boyfriend to use condoms because he says she have a next man that is why she wants to use a condom.*

*Some men are afraid to buy them, they think they're a big man, maybe their friends will tease them saying that the woman won't go bare back with them, their woman doesn't trust you. Some girls are afraid of giving their man condoms that it will mean he will go out and use them with someone else.*

Issues around trust and condom use were explored further in the peer researcher analysis workshop. Peer researchers were asked what they would think if a primary partner suggested using a condom. Their responses were consistent with data from their peers:

*If he suggests using a condom with me, his bonafide woman, I will kick him out.*

*He is either sick, or has another woman.*

*If the woman suggests it, there will be a big argument - unless it is used as a contraceptive.*

The clear norm that condoms are not used with the primary partner suggests that implicitly, condoms should be used with casual, or 'outside' partners. However, it is accepted that if a man 'loves' one of his outside partners, he might not want to use a condom with her either. Likewise, if a woman has a

partner specifically for sexual pleasure, she is less likely to want to use condoms as she does not want to compromise his or her pleasure.

In addition to the issue that condoms are seen as a symbol of mistrust, there are other factors that discourage condom use. These include them not feeling comfortable or pleasurable, quality issues (including breakages and expired stock), peer pressure (friends teasing a man that he could not make his girl go bare back) and allergies. In spite of these problems, the quotations below show that most participants are simultaneously aware of the advantages of wearing condoms too.

*Them don't like use condom because it kill vibes, because when you go skin to skin it feel better, because you a feel all a the gum and the tightness. Only a fool will wear condom, some say it is the right thing to do because you don't know who to trust.*

*It is hard sometimes to get your man to wear condom because them follow them friend and say them no like condom.*

*It is the safer way to go because you can prevent yourself from getting pregnant or from getting an infectious disease it gives 99% chance of escaping getting a disease. It takes the pleasure out of the sex because it blocks direct contact so you cannot feel the man.*

*Sometimes he and his partner are all fired up and in the mood and they have a full erection but as soon as he put on the condom it kills his vibe or his nature. In order for him to have sex with the girl he will try another condom or do without it. It is best he doesn't use a condom because he still isn't getting any satisfaction.*

*Some people are allergic to some condoms and it gives bumps on the penis and makes it sore.*

*Some say condoms come to kill out black people race because if everybody use condoms successfully there will be no children being born and people will die and nobody will be left. Some say they break them vibes it too tight around the penis vein...People use condoms because they don't want to get pregnant and they don't trust their partner.*

One of the most important problems with condoms appears to be allergies, itching, and rashes, for both men and women. Compared with other PEER research projects carried out in other countries, the frequency with which stories feature adverse reactions to condoms is very high. It is unclear whether this is due to a widely held normative belief that condoms result in allergies, or whether there might be some issues with the quality of condoms in Jamaica, and whether expired or poorly stored condoms are being used. Additionally, it could be that people who do not want to use condoms use their 'allergy' as an accepted excuse not to use them.

Another reason not to wear condoms might be because one or both of the parties want children. As it was said of one man who refused to wear condoms, 'him want one bag a pickney all bout' (father children with lots of women). Several other stories feature men who deliberately sabotage condoms by making a hole in them. The presumed motive is that they want to get the woman pregnant and trap her in the relationship. Thus men's desire to have children is another potential barrier to condom use. Wanting to get pregnant is also a possible reason why some women are disinclined to consistently use condoms in the primary partnership. Having a child with a primary partner can be an important way of cementing the relationship and securing resources.

The overall picture from the data is of inconsistent condom use with non-primary partners, and then initial condom use in the early stages of relationships, with trust developing quickly, and a general reluctance to use them with primary partners after this.

### ***10.8 Condom Supply***

There are several stories which demonstrate that there is wide awareness of the importance of 'being prepared' and having condoms on one's person or in the house.

*My brother always have a condom in his top shirt pocket or wallet and he doesn't have a steady girl... So she asked, 'how come he always have a condom...it is a part of his life, and he can't just go have sex with a girl and don't use a condom, worse if he doesn't know her'. She asked if he ever had a one night stand, and he said plenty of times. So she said, 'that is why he always have a condom even when he is going to play football?' and he said, 'yea, because you don't know what can happen'.*

*[A couple had run out of condoms] She explained that she didn't want the bartender to know her business. He stopped at the supermarket and he went inside and bought condoms while she waited in the car. She told him that from now on he must have condoms so if he knows he doesn't have enough he should get a next pack so he doesn't run out of condoms.*

Pharmacies are by far the most trusted location to buy condoms, as they are thought to check their stock regularly and sell in-date condoms. They also sell a range of condoms. Supermarkets, shops and bars are the most convenient locations to buy condoms. Buying condoms in supermarkets is spoken of in very matter of fact terms, as they are picked up along with everyday groceries. However, there are more quality and privacy issues at non-pharmacy outlets.

*They mostly go to the pharmacy because it is better there, get different brands of condoms and they also remove the expired ones and won't sell that to you.*

*They mostly go to the pharmacy; because the ones in the wholesale and shop expire and the owner can't bother to replace it.*

There are gender differentials in sourcing condoms: women are generally said to go to clinics, whereas men are thought more likely to go to shops or bars. There are many stories in which women are reluctant to buy condoms from shops or pharmacies because there is a prevalent attitude that male condoms are for men, and therefore men should purchase them. Women buying condoms are often described as 'foolish', as illustrated by stories of girls who stock up on condoms, only to find that their man is taking them and using them to have sex with other women:

*A girl says she goes to the family planning clinic to get condoms because it is more private and cheaper to afford. They don't want everybody to know – in the shop people see and they talk.*

*Some women will buy, but mostly it is the man that buys because the man always has sex on their mind. They will walk with condoms because everyday they meet somebody and they may get a one night stand.*

*There is a girl where her boyfriend doesn't want to use a condom and if he is going to use it he will send her to buy it. When she goes to the shop they ask her why she is buying a man condom so she starts to buy woman condom and she opens it and says it is big and even bigger than the man condom.*

*Males mostly go to get the condoms. Women don't go to the shop and buy man condoms because they are going to look like a big fool because people are going to say look at her she is buying a condom for her man before she buys it for herself. They say him not want to use it so he sends her to buy it with her own money and she should just buy the female condom instead.*

*This girl her boyfriend does not want to use no condom and if she wants him to use it she goes to buy it herself. When she buys the man condom they see how you are a fool buying a man condom you are an idiot don't use your money and buy no man condom buy the female one and do that. She uses it and she finds out she is scratched she finds some bumps and goes to the doctor and the doctor tells her to stop using it because her skin is sensitive to it.*

As these quotations show, it is widely thought that women buying male condoms might be teased, and told that they should buy female condoms instead. There is wide awareness of the existence of the female condom, but the overall impression from the data is that few women have unrealistic ideas about them. Even stories purportedly about women who had used them suggest a lack of real experience.

*Her boyfriend has a lot of girls and at night time when she doesn't see him he is gone to buy sex. Her friend saw him buying sex and told her.*

*Every night he comes home he starts to take off her clothes and she can't tell him that she not giving him anything because he will beat her so she has to put on the female condom, and doesn't let him know because he doesn't want to use any condom with her. She uses it because she doesn't know if he has any diseases.*

It seems unlikely, though not impossible, that this woman's boyfriend would not notice that she was using a female condom. However, this story is informative about people's perceptions of the consequences of asking a primary male partner to use a condom; in this case, the woman feared being beaten. Female condoms are most commonly seen as 'even larger and uglier' than male condoms, suggesting a low degree of enthusiasm among young women to use them.

There are also a few stories about girls who are not too shy to go and buy male condoms:

*I have a friend, right now she is not afraid to buy a pack of condoms for her boyfriend. So one day we went to Halfway Tree [capital of St Andrew] and she turned to me and said, 'wait on me, I am going into York pharmacy to buy some condoms'. In there was full up of people, and me start laugh, and say, 'my girl, you serious? Eeh!'. And she turned to me and say, 'me have to protect myself, because me nuh sure of my boyfriend'.*

*Mainly big woman and young girls go because them want protect themselves and some of the man dem don't have the guts to go themselves but the ladies are braver.*

There are also instances of people indirectly sourcing condoms from friends or relatives, begging them from their friends, or sending friends to buy them for them. In a few cases young women are not afraid of buying condoms as such, and are happy to buy them for their friends: they just did not want their parents to find out that they were having sex. Shops are seen as social, public places where privacy can not be maintained. One peer researcher spoke of how her friend feels comfortable buying condoms for a friend but not for herself:

*Another girl and guy wanted to have sex, and none of them wanted to go buy the condoms, so they asked the girl (interviewee) to go buy it, and because she wasn't going to be the one to use it she went to the bar (closer to where the friend lives) and buy it. When she walked in people were staring at her, but because she knew she wasn't going to use it she never feel any way.*

This scenario suggests that young women do have the confidence to go to buy condoms when they feel confident within themselves, and as long as privacy can be ensured.

There is high brand awareness, based on criteria such as smell, texture (e.g. ribbed), thickness and reliability. Some people are said to like condoms with 'stone' in the end, a substance believed to anesthetise the penis and prolong sex. Long Life was the brand associated with this quality.

*They use Rough Rider because of the studs because it makes it (sex) feel natural because it is like not wearing a condom like it is skin to skin and it gives a nice feeling. They use latex because it gives a better ride and strength (strong so it won't burst). Long love because it lasts longer. They use any condom because they can control self pleasure, they can control themselves.*

It is worth mentioning that one peer researcher recounts a case in which a girl did not want to use Long Love because she 'could not keep up with' the prolonged sex. Thus a market with a range of condom types and specifications is necessary to please different tastes, and the Jamaican condom market appears to do this, as a wide range of brand preferences is reported, with different brands associated with different qualities. Table 1 displays the number of times each attribute was mentioned in association with a particular brand. The following table should not be read as a representative cross-section of perceived condom attributes in the population, but suggests that certain factors are more important than others in choosing a brand, and that certain brands are strongly associated with certain characteristics.

Table 1. Attributes associated with condom brands and the number of times each was mentioned.

	Positive					Negative			Total
	Smell	Prolongs sex	Thick	Strong	Comfy/ feels good	Can't feel it	Studs/ grip	Breaks easily	
Slam	2	2	2	2	2				10
Durex	1	1	1	1		1		1	6
Long love	1	7	4	4	2	1			19
Rough R	2		5	7	4		3	1	22
Lion Pride			1	1			4		6
Sensation			1	1					2
Vibrator			1						1
Sex you	2								2
Panther								1	1
Latex			1					2	3
Conduct		1							1
Top gun		1				1	1		3
Sweetheart		1				1			2
TOTAL	8	13	16	16	8	4	8	5	78

Several other attributes are mentioned only once: being flavoured (Slam), being ungreasy (Durex), being moist (Long Love), and being large (Sensation).

By enumerating these associations it seems that prolonging sex, thickness, and strength are the qualities most frequently used to describe and differentiate brands, over and above other qualities such as comfort or not

being able to feel the condom. It is significant that thickness and dependability feature as the most important attributes for people. This suggests that if they decide to use a condom, people want to know they can trust its performance, and are prepared to forego sensitivity and thinness. Rough Rider and Long Love are the most frequently mentioned brands, Long Love particularly for its quality of prolonging sex, and Rough Rider for dependability. Thickness and strength seem to be linked in people's minds.

*They use Slam, Rough Rider, Long Love and Panther. The Long love use because of the sensation that they get, it feels good. Rough Rider use because it is thick, it is hard to burst. Slam it is a brand they know and come to love because it feels good. People don't use Panther much because it easy to break.*

*Her boyfriend always using Long love and asked him why and he said it is because it is much stronger.*

The price of condoms is not mentioned or differentiated between the brands, suggesting that cost is not a major barrier to accessing condoms. However, people do note that condoms from the clinic are cheaper, and that cheaper condoms tend to smell of plastic,

The smell of condoms is an important factor: aside from people complaining about the persistent smell of cheap condoms, condoms that smell good (e.g. like shampoo) are seen to appeal to women.

*A boy I know had a girlfriend, and he said that they ever realized that when using the cheaper condoms it leaves a smell on him, or in the room, and everybody would ask him he just done do something (have sex), and then he would say that they are even thinner than the more expensive condoms. Cheaper ones also give him rashes when he is finished.*

*Some have different type of shampoo scent and some man say when they have a certain type it don't feel like they have it on and it feel like bare back same way.*

## 11 Who Influences Young Women?

A salient referent is a person, or group, who is influential in establishing normative beliefs and values (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). It is assumed that people will feel social pressure to behave (or not behave) in certain ways, according to whether they think that the salient referent would approve or not (Fishbein and Manfredo, 1992). The data provide strong evidence that young women want to be positively led and supported, and perceive themselves as vulnerable to bad influences. They credit others with a lot of influence in their lives, both in terms of the importance of encouragement and material support to succeed (in school, for instance) and in terms of being 'led astray' in explaining a person's failures.

Salient referents are inferred from the PEER data by seeing who young women talk about looking up to, or who they want to be like in future, or who supports them. Mothers and other senior female relatives (aunts, grandmothers) are often discussed as confidantes, and as providing a positive, supportive influence:

*They look up to their family or special people in the family. Like the grandmother who talks good things about them, they will say Grandma I want to become just like you. Grandmother always encourage them about good things and tell them stories of long time days, always say in her time is only one man she take at a time, a man will have to leave before they can break up...*

*Her mother has 5 children and she will go the extra mile to make them happy, doesn't force them to do anything and allows them to become their own person. She always says books before boys and boys bring baby, and education is the key for everything.*

Women describe admiring down-to-earth, modest local women more frequently than the rich and famous:

*Cause people dem admire, dem just like si dem, the way dem dress, the way dem talk, the type a work dem do, dem want to become like dem. Fi a ghetto person, dem no dress like dem little skettel, dem dress intelligent... dem speak proper English, the type of job dem do, it just fit dem personality, and she would a want to become like dem person deh, that's why she admire dem person deh... she see a girl, she just like look pan har, she just like how di girl stay. Everytime the girl a pass, she always sey, my girl you know sey mi like how yuh flex, mi just like how you stay, although a ghetto you come from, you no gwaan like no little skettel and you no dress like no little skettel.*

*She sey fi har friend dem, whey she use to go a school wid, fi dem family dem rich, and a pure rich people dem look up to. But she now sey the simple people dem whey look nice, she sey she want to be like them. She sey she like my mother, cause she dress nice and ever look*

*nice. She sey she wish my mother was fi har mother... like everything come in, my mother have it. She don't wear no short up something. She wear things that covers her skin. Like reach a har knee, skirt reach a har knee and har blouse dem at har elbow, and har hair ever do. She some people she just like how dem talk, because fi a ghetto person, dem no talk ghetto, dem talk English.*

These quotations describe a number of qualities admired in other women: speaking well, dressing well, and carrying themselves well. Working hard for the benefit of one's family is also admired, though the fact that young women who manage to hold down a job and raise a family single-handedly are reflected on with such admiration suggests that this achievement is remarkable and unusual.

DJ's, who play the music at street dance and in clubs, are mentioned as being influential and admired. Two peer researchers also mention Police Officers, and one mentions local politicians who had improved housing and roads. In addition to qualities within local people, some singers and musicians are admired: Bob Marley, for bringing acclaim to Jamaica; Beenie Man, for being real and authentic; Beyonce, for her singing talents, style, and hair; and Denzel Washington, for being a successful black actor.

The importance of friendships and the peer group, and the negative consequences of what happened when these broke down, suggest that peers and friends are very important salient referents to these young women. Stories featuring women who broke away from peer pressure in staying at school or not getting pregnant were presented as remarkable, suggesting that women feel very strong pressures to fit in with their peer group.

*...girl in community, she is so gorgeous and she dress nice, I admire her because she is the only person in my community who hold up her head. She was in a group of friends, all of them get pregnant and they were influencing her to do the same thing, so one day she just stopped walking with them and they walk and tell everybody in the community that she dash wey belly but she still continue her work and stay in school and she is now a doctor.*

*... good friend, she is very understanding and looks out for people whether its good or bad, she love to go to street dance on Wednesdays and whenever we go there she likes to drink Red Bull and its like Wow! She likes to admire the selector because he is so handsome.*

Although the influence of peers and families is accorded great importance, internal qualities such as determination are also recognised as influencing a person's fate. People do not have fatalistic attitudes ('it's up to God'), but rather, feel that life is the result of people's own character, as well as the support or hindrance of those around them:

*I ask her why people say their life is not all that bad. She said, people say they make life the way they want it to be. If they sit down and a*

*bawl, bawl every minute and not trying to push themselves, well that's how the life is going to be for them.*

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# **ANNEX 1 – Interview Prompts Developed by the Research Team**

## **Interview 1 Social life**

What do people say about the types of friends they have?  
What do people say are good friends and bad friends?  
What do people say about the fun they have?  
What do people say about people they look up to or admire?  
What do they say about families around here?  
What do people say about the way they earn money?  
What do people say about how hard their life is?  
What do people say about how they manage?  
What do people do to get the things you want to achieve in the future?  
Who would they go to if they get in trouble?

## **Interview 2 Relationships**

What do people say about things they do to have fun in a relationship?  
What do people say about finding a nice guy to start a relationship with?  
What do people say are the different men they have?  
What do people say about young girls talking to a lot of men?  
What do people say about a young girl talking to an older man?  
Why do they talk to the older men?  
What do people say about how their friends are treated in a relationship?  
What do people say about trust and respect in relationships?  
What do they say about trust changing?

## **Interview 3**

What do people say about sex, good and bad?  
What do people say about using condoms?  
Why do they use them?  
What do people say about female condoms?  
What do people say about the type of condoms they use and why?  
Where do people go to get condoms?  
Where do they mostly go?  
Who mostly goes?  
What do people say about AIDS and HIV?  
What do people do if they find they have HIV?  
Have you ever heard about someone who has the virus?