
CSSF Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk

Masculinities and Criminal Violence in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago

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Abstract

This paper summarises and complements a recent research project in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago implemented by the Caribbean Male Action Network (CariMAN) titled 'Masculinities and Criminal Violence: Bridging the Gap Between Research and Policy and Practice' commissioned by the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The CariMAN study was based on a survey of 1,577 incarcerated and non-incarcerated men using the [International Men and Gender Equity Survey \(IMAGES\) methodology, as well as qualitative/life history interviews with 23 men and 13 women](#) in the two countries. All men in the incarcerated sample were imprisoned for violent crimes. The research focused on men's attitudes to gender equality, gender role expectations, gender-based violence (GBV) and gun ownership as well as their own family relationships. The findings and recommendations of the CariMAN study were then used as the basis for this WPS Helpdesk paper in order to draw out key findings as well as contrast and triangulate them with other research on these issues in the two countries. Furthermore, six expert interviews were conducted by the Helpdesk consultant.

The key findings of the CariMAN research are that

- In both countries, incarcerated men were **younger, less educated, and less likely to be in a functioning relationship** than men in the general population; men with disabilities were also over-represented among the prison population;
- In both countries, men who had grown up with one or both parents or with an adult guardian until age 18 were **less likely to be incarcerated**; in Trinidad and Tobago men in prison were more likely to have been **exposed to violence as children**;
- In both countries, men in both the general population and the incarcerated sample held **similar beliefs about masculinity**, highlighting expectations on men to be providers, protectors, and fathers; and
- Men in Jamaica who held **more gender equitable views** were less likely to be incarcerated; in Trinidad and Tobago men who were **more controlling** of their partner were more likely to be incarcerated.

Furthermore, the study found

- A high level of **disapproval of violence against women** amongst male respondents, yet continued practices which fall under this category; as well as
- A strong correlation between **notions of masculinity and gun ownership**, but also ambivalent attitudes towards firearms.

The CariMAN findings do not contradict but rather complement other studies on these issues in the region. While the way the data is presented does not allow for a deeper analysis of differences between expressions and expectations amongst different groups of men (e.g. men of different ages, socio-economic strata and so on), taken together with other research, it allowed for the Helpdesk to formulate a set of recommendations around **further research, community-level programming, and state policies and state actor approaches**.

These recommendations are in addition to ones formulated by CariMAN itself, which are presented as an Annex to the paper.

Findings and Analysis

Introduction

Criminal violence is a major concern in both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Much of the public, policy and media attention in both countries over the past decade has been on escalating armed violence linked to criminal gangs, but rates of other forms of criminal violence are also troubling. These include gender-based violence (GBV),¹ non-gang-related homicides, violent robberies and break-ins. While the majority of men do not engage in criminal violence, most violent crime is committed by men and boys and is closely linked to certain notions of masculinity, some of which have been historically dominant and/or culturally celebrated.

Gender roles and expectations, together with other intersecting social identity markers such as age, socio-economic class, location or disability, play a key role in both the exposure to, and perpetration of, violent conflict and serious crimes, which affect and involve men, women and gender diverse persons differently. Given the central role played by men in the perpetration of criminal violence, and the heightened social expectations and pressures on men to behave in a certain way which impact on their role in this violence, there has been an increasing interest in the Caribbean region as elsewhere to examine the linkages between masculinities, violence and crime. It is important to keep in mind that these gender expectations are constructed and reinforced by men as much as by women, and sustained and reproduced through wider societal and cultural institutions, such as schools, mass media or, increasingly, social media. Thus, changing these gender norms and roles requires a holistic approach.

This policy paper summarises recent research, commissioned by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), carried out by the Caribbean Male Action Network (CariMAN) which examined links between masculinities and criminal violence in both countries, and compares this with other available research and programming findings on these issues regionally.² It briefly summarises the methodologies used in the CariMAN study and this policy paper, and then provides a brief contextual background on Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. This is followed by a discussion of key findings from the CariMAN study and other research, ending with a set of recommendations for future action to complement those identified in the CariMAN report.

Methodology

This policy brief draws primarily on the results of a study commissioned by the FCDO and carried out by CariMAN.³ The study consisted of a quantitative survey both among incarcerated and non-incarcerated men⁴ in the two countries using the [International Men and Gender Equity Survey \(IMAGES\) scale](#),⁵ as well as a qualitative part consisting of in-depth life history interviews with men and in-depth interviews with men and women. For the survey, the sample of general population men was 576 in Jamaica and 600 in Trinidad and Tobago, and for incarcerated men it was 201 in Jamaica and 200 in Trinidad and Tobago. The surveyed men were between the ages of 18 and 65+. Men who were incarcerated during

¹ This category includes a wide range of different forms of violence, including domestic violence; intimate partner violence; non-partner sexual assault; sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse; gender-based emotional and economic abuse; controlling behaviour; online sexual abuse; and homo- and transphobic hate crimes.

² Basdeo-Gobin, Tricia, Shalinee Bahadur and Igor Himelfarb (2022) *Masculinities and Criminal Violence: Bridging the Gap Between Research and Policy and Practice – Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago*. St. Joseph: CariMAN

³ Basdeo-Gobin et al. (2022).

⁴ The selection criteria stipulated that the participants should self-identify as a man.

⁵ This is a comprehensive survey originally designed by Equipundo (previously Promundo) and the International Center for Research on Women and has been adapted and carried out in over 20 countries. It explores male attitudes and practices on a wide variety of topics related to gender equality.

the time of study were all charged with serious crimes, such as murder, rape, drug trafficking or gang violence. For the qualitative part, life history interviews were conducted with seven men in each country, and in-depth interviews were conducted with four men and six women in Jamaica, and five men and seven women in Trinidad and Tobago, respectively. In addition, three key informant interviews were conducted by the CariMAN research team in Jamaica.⁶ The data was collected between December 2021 and March 2022.

The CariMAN data as presented in the report does not go into much detail in terms of possible links between gender expectations of the surveyed men with their age, socio-economic class or location of the interviewees.⁷ What the report does highlight is that in both countries the sample of incarcerated men is slightly younger than in the general population, and that the former were likely to be less educated, be more likely to work in less well-paid jobs, and come from less stable families or relationships. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, there was also a higher percentage of Muslim men among the incarcerated men's sample than in the general population. It is, however, not clear from the report whether or not this is reflective of the incarcerated population as a whole, or just a feature of the research sample. A majority of male respondents of the incarcerated population in both countries stated that their partner was more educated than them, while in the general population most respondents stated that their partners were either equally or more educated than them, in line with other studies on women's and girls' better education in the region.⁸

In addition to the report findings, this paper draws on desk research and six expert interviews conducted by the consultant between November and December 2022 with the CariMAN team, select academics and civil society representatives and UN agency staff working on issues of gender and criminal violence in the Caribbean region. The desk research consisted of a literature review of relevant reports by national agencies of both countries, international organisations such as the United Nations, civil society reports as well as available academic research.

Overview of gender and violent crime in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago

While not all men nor all forms of masculinity – the ways of being, acting and being expected to act as man – are violent, crime statistics and social sciences research point to the need to examine some men's propensity to resort to violence in private and public spheres.⁹ Particular expressions of masculinity are closely linked to expectations of male dominance, of being in control of one's life and that of others, and to responding to real or perceived slights with violence or threats thereof. These expectations of masculinity can be more closely linked to men of a certain age, socio-economic class, education level or location (e.g. urban vs rural), but there is no automatic link between these and violence. Men's violent and non-violent behaviours cut across all of these lines.¹⁰ As the research by CariMAN and others shows, even amongst

⁶ The report's methodology does not further specify who these key informants were.

⁷ Of the sample of incarcerated men in Jamaica, close to half came from the crime-affected parishes of St Andrew, St Catherine and Clarendon, however the data as presented currently does not differentiate by location. No specific places of origin are mentioned for the Trinbagonian sample.

⁸ In Jamaica, however, 45% of the men from the general population did not answer the question.

⁹ Based on data quoted in the CariMAN report, for example, of the people arrested in Jamaica in 2019, 98% were male, and in Trinidad and Tobago in 2015, perpetrators of murder were 95% male, as were 90% of murder victims.

¹⁰ See also CARICOM (2012) Youth Masculinities and Violence in the Caribbean, and James, Carl E. and Andrea Davis (2014) Jamaican Males' Readings of Masculinities and the Relationship to Violence on Variances between Men of Different Ages, Socio-economic Classes and Locations.

those men most involved in violent crime, there is a degree of ambivalence towards violence and at times marked positive deviance from more problematic notions of masculinity, as discussed further below. While the CariMAN data, as currently presented, does not allow for an examination of differences in gender norms between age groups, social classes and other categories such as education status, for example, it does however shed light on the impacts of childhood experiences, current relationship status as well as dominant gender role expectations.

Jamaica

The homicide rate in Jamaica in 2022 was the second highest in the world, at 43.85 per 100,000 inhabitants.¹¹ Much of this homicidal violence, along with other criminal activity, has been attributed to gangs. According to a 2017 study by the Jamaican Ministry of National Security, there were 274 gangs with approximately 9,000 members operating in the country, and by the end of 2019, the Jamaica Constabulary Force estimated that the number of gangs had grown to 389.¹² The proliferation in the number of gangs does not necessarily mean an increase in members, as this is in part indicative of some gangs splintering into rival factions.¹³ Whilst the majority of gang members are men or boys, women and girls are both directly and indirectly involved as well. The masculinities enacted by men and boys in gangs often draw on exaggerated, or hypermasculine, gender performances stressing male dominance, 'toughness', competitive masculinity, aggression and willingness to use violence, as well as often elements of misogyny and homophobia.

The roots of gangs in Jamaica go back to the 1960s, when rival political parties started arming supporters, but changed in nature in the 1980s and 1990s with their involvement in the narcotics trade. Between the 1990s and the mid-2000s, murder rates doubled, and gangs were responsible for the majority of the increase in violent crime, in particular homicides and femicides.¹⁴ In addition to narcotics, the gangs are also engaged in crimes such as extortion and lottery scamming. Crime rates, while fluctuating, have remained high since the rise two decades ago, with violence largely focused on particular neighbourhoods.¹⁵ In spite of the violence, however, at the community level gangs may also provide particular goods and services, thereby giving some of the groups and their leaders a degree of social standing.¹⁶

In addition to gang violence, GBV rates are also of concern in Jamaica. According to Jamaica's national Women's Health Survey (2016), 27.8 per cent of women had experienced some form of GBV during their lifetime, with 25.2 per cent of women having experienced physical violence at the hands of a male partner.¹⁷ Perpetration of GBV is also rooted in gender role expectations, in particular male entitlement and privilege, as well as a normalisation of violence.

Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago in 2022 had the twelfth highest homicide rate in the world at 30.65 per 100,000 inhabitants.¹⁸ According to Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) statistics, there were over 15,000 reports of domestic violence incidents between 2010 and 2016, of which 72 per cent of these reports were related to women.¹⁹ Similar to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago also has a long-standing problem with gang violence. According to the TTPS, there were 134 gangs

¹¹ The highest was El Salvador with a rate of 52.02 per 100 000. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/262963/ranking-the-20-countries-with-the-most-murders-per-100-000-inhabitants/>.

¹² <https://jis.gov.jm/senate-accepts-report-on-anti-gang-legislation/>.

¹³ CAPRI (2020) *Guns Out – The Splintering of Jamaica's Gangs*.

¹⁴ For a brief historical overview, see Leslie, Glaister (2010) *Confronting the Don: The Political Economy of Gang Violence in Jamaica*.

¹⁵ CAPRI (2020) and Ministry of National Security (2022) *Sectoral Presentation 2022/2023*.

¹⁶ Basdeo-Gobin et al. (2022).

¹⁷ Jamaica Women's Health Survey (2016). It should be noted that as domestic and intimate partner violence tend to globally be under-reported, the actual figure is likely higher.

¹⁸ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/262963/ranking-the-20-countries-with-the-most-murders-per-100-000-inhabitants/>.

¹⁹ Central Statistical Office (2018), National Women's Health Survey for Trinidad and Tobago (2018). See also Hosein, Gabrielle et al. (2018) *Gender-based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago*.

active in the country, with 60 per cent of the homicides and femicides being gang-related, and around 80 per cent of shootings being linked to them.²⁰ Much of the gang-related violence has historically been concentrated in particular neighbourhoods of the capital, Port of Spain, but violence in recent decades has increasingly spread to other parts of the country outside of the capital city as urbanisation has spread on Trinidad. Older gangs in Trinidad, especially in Port of Spain, have historical roots going back to the 1950s steel band era, but have in the past also been linked to political mobilisation. Violence has escalated over the past decades as the gangs have become more involved in the international narcotics trade and acquired illegal firearms.²¹ Beyond violent crime, Trinbagonian gangs are also involved in white collar crime, including the contracting of labour and extortion.²² Nonetheless, gangs often also marshal a degree of local support through the provision of goods, services and protection to the communities in which they have been historically rooted.²³ However, the spread of gangs to newly urbanised areas of the country, the splintering of groups, and the rise of younger gang leaders has led to the weakening of social ties between communities and these groups.²⁴ As in Jamaica, the gang violence phenomenon is highly masculinised and linked to hypermasculine gender identities, though women and girls also play important supporting roles (e.g. as partners, carers or supportive community members) and are occasionally directly involved as gang members.²⁵

Key research findings

The data collected for the CariMAN report provides a rich body of evidence upon which to base future policies and programming on work with men on transforming masculinities with the aim of promoting both gender equality and violence prevention. The findings do, however, need to be treated with care as the data shows important nuances between men of different backgrounds in the two countries that need to be factored in, rather than treating men as a homogenous whole. However, apart from incarcerated vs. non-incarcerated status, the data in its current format does not allow for a more detailed breakdown based on, for example, age or socio-economic class.²⁶

Some of the findings in the data are also contradictory; for example, when comparing men's stated beliefs and attitudes with actual practices.²⁷ As with any research on attitudes and practices, there is a risk of social desirability bias in the findings; that is, respondents giving replies which they assume the data collectors may want to hear or deem to be the 'correct' answers.

The key findings as identified by CariMAN are summarised in the Text Box below and presented in full in the Annex together with the CariMAN's key recommendations.

²⁰ Trinidad Guardian (2022). "Jacobs: Country has 134 gangs accounting for most daily crimes," 11 May 2022

²¹ Pawelz, Janina (2018) Hobsbawm in Trinidad: Understanding Contemporary Modalities of Urban Violence. *Conflict, Security & Development* 18:5, 409-432; and Baird, Adam, Matthew Louis Bishop and Dylan Kerrigan (2022) "Breaking bad"? Gangs, masculinities, and murder in Trinidad, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 24:4, 632-657.

²² Wallace, Wendell (2020) Gangs, Gang Dynamics, and Gender: Exploring Gangs in Trinidad and Tobago, in in Biko Agozino, Emmanuel Onyeozili, Nontyatyambo Dastile, Viviane Saleh-Hanna (Eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Africana Criminologies*, London: Routledge, 187-202

²³ Pawelz (2018).

²⁴ Expert interview, December 2022.

²⁵ Baird et al (2022).

²⁶ As suggested in the recommendations, the data could be revisited and re-analysed to see if there are any other patterns that might emerge.

²⁷ For example, men who consider a man's role to be the main breadwinner may be dependent on other family members' income; men who see violence against women as unacceptable may still excuse their own violence against a partner.

KEY FINDINGS OF CARIMAN RESEARCH (SEE ANNEX FOR FULL LIST OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

- In both countries, incarcerated men were **younger, less educated and less likely to be in a functioning relationship** than men in the general population. Men with disabilities were also over-represented among the prison population.
- In both countries, men who had grown up with one or both parents or with an adult guardian until age 18 were **less likely to be incarcerated**; in Trinidad and Tobago men in prison were more likely to have been **exposed to violence as children**.
- In both countries, men in both the general population and the incarcerated sample held **similar beliefs about masculinity**, highlighting expectations on men to be providers, protectors and fathers.
- Men in Jamaica who held **more gender equitable views** were less likely to be incarcerated; in Trinidad and Tobago men who were **more controlling** of their partner were more likely to be incarcerated.

The CariMAN report findings focus largely on differences and similarities between incarcerated and non-incarcerated men, and on factors that may increase the likelihood of men ending up in prison for committing serious, often violent offences. In the following two sections, we highlight some of the other findings emerging from the CariMAN data, which highlight dominant gender role expectations among the men surveyed regarding women's and men's roles, the acceptability of violence as well as attitudes to gun ownership.

Gender role expectations and family life

While care needs to be taken to not over-generalise findings, some key trends do emerge from the data. Men surveyed and interviewed in both countries tended to share a by-and-large 'traditional' view of men as having the responsibility of being the economic providers and protectors of their family, of having agency and of being respected. Men's views of women's expected roles in the household were also traditional: 64 per cent of Jamaican men held the view that a woman's most important role is to take care of the household and cook for her family, as did 58.8 per cent of the men in Trinidad and Tobago. In both countries, incarcerated men were more likely to subscribe to these expectations of women's roles.

Nonetheless, there were notable signs of more gender equitable attitudes than what one might expect from a traditional world view on gender:

Most men in both countries talk about sex with their partner (68.8% in Jamaica and 59.9% in Trinidad and Tobago); take responsibilities in the household chores (86.1% in Jamaica and 88.9% in Trinidad and Tobago); don't believe that women ever deserve to be hit or beaten (87.4% in Jamaica and 94% in Trinidad and Tobago) or should tolerate violence to keep the family together (92.3% in Jamaica and 96.5% in Trinidad and Tobago).²⁸

The findings on men's disapproval of violence against women are of particular note, as these offer direct entry point for work with men on violence prevention. There is a gap, based on available GBV prevalence figures, between men's attitudes and practices, as well as possibly in terms of an understanding of what constitutes GBV.²⁹ Deliberate verbal or emotional

²⁸ Basdeo-Gobin et al. (2022), p. 91

²⁹ Given different methodologies and population samples, the CariMAN data cannot be directly compared with existing prevalence data, but there is an indicative gap between attitudes and practices here. On men's attitudes to GBV, see also Kerrigan, Dylan (2019) "[She Look For It': Young Men, Community Violence, and Gender in Urban Trinidad](#)", *Caribbean Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 1, No. 4, April 2019, 29–59.

abuse against a partner was, for example, reported by 19 per cent of the Jamaican general population sample, by 26 per cent of incarcerated Jamaican men, 43 per cent of the general Trinbagonian population sample and 51 per cent of the incarcerated Trinbagonian men.

Furthermore, a majority of men in both countries, both in the general population and amongst incarcerated respondents, disagreed that a man should have the final say on household decisions or that it was embarrassing for men to be responsible for childcare and household chores.

Fatherhood was also seen by respondents as a central part of manhood, and while most men believed household chores were the domain of women, they held more equitable views on childcare and were more likely to be more involved in activities related to raising their children, especially disciplining children. Potentially problematically, however, sizeable majorities of men in both countries felt that the physical disciplining of children was sometimes justified.³⁰ In both countries, more men from the general population than incarcerated men held this opinion. The willingness to resort to violence in disciplining children is also concerning in terms of its longer-term impacts, as the findings of the study also point to a correlation between childhood experiences of violence – both at home and in school – and later perpetration of violence in adult life by the men surveyed and interviewed. This included a correlation between experiences of childhood sexual abuse and later incarceration; and while there is no pre-determined causal pathway, this finding does underscore the need for psycho-social support services to child sex abuse survivors regardless of gender.

The findings of the research further highlighted the positive role of supportive parents and healthy relationships on men. In both countries, men who during their childhood lived with both parents, a parent or a family member adult, as well as respondents who defined the relationship with their romantic partners as good or very good, were less likely to be incarcerated; and while it is not possible to establish a causal relationship, the correlation between good past and current relationships and not being part of the incarcerated sample were in some cases marked.³¹

Similarly, a lack of supportive and caring family structures as well as of positive role models were identified by respondents as push/pull factors for joining gangs:

Many of Trinbagonian incarcerated males interviewed highlighted the role of “friendship” in their involvement in crime, a desire to fit in and belong as a major pull factor into crime. In addition, both Jamaican and Trinbagonian males identified the role of the gang member who deputizes as father figure for these young males as one of the reasons for gang membership especially when father/parental guidance, love and support were lacking at home.³²

Gun ownership

The findings of the research on attitudes towards gun ownership and use revealed differences between the incarcerated men and the general population. In both countries, there was a high level of buy-in to the statement that men should know how to handle a gun. While the reasons for this are not further explored in the CariMAN report, expert interviews suggest that these are linked to notions of men seeking to live up to expectations of being a protector, general disquiet over rising

³⁰ While the phrasing of the question does leave room for ambiguity (e.g. respondents thinking of extreme cases where violent disciplining may be justified), other studies point to this being a widespread practice. For example, according to UNICEF (2022) A Statistical Profile of Violence Against Children in Latin America and the Caribbean, around 78% of children in Trinidad and Tobago and around 85% in Jamaica reported experiencing violent discipline at home. Similarly, the normalisation of physical disciplining was reflected in the qualitative study by Kerrigan (2019), in which young, socio-economically Trinbagonian respondents felt that one of the reasons for crime and anti-social behaviour was children not being disciplined harshly enough in school or at home.

³¹ For example, amongst the Jamaican respondents, men who had lived with an adult caregiver before they were 18 were 38 times less likely to be from the incarcerated sample, while men who defined the relationship with their romantic partners as good or very good were 45 times more likely not to be incarcerated.

³² Basdeo-Gobin et al. (2022), p.97.

rates of violent crime, decreasing trust in security provision by the state and increased social acceptance of private gun ownership.³³

Perhaps unsurprisingly, significantly more incarcerated men in the CariMAN data in both countries had been involved in gun violence as compared to men in the general population sample. However, interestingly, men in the general population were more likely to link gun ownership to successful male heterosexuality than among the incarcerated population, and the latter were more aware of the risks associated with guns and also more in support of firearms being only available to those working in security-related jobs (Table 1).

Table 1: Men’s attitudes to guns and gun ownership

	Jamaica		Trinidad and Tobago	
	Incarcerated men (percentage in agreement with statement)	Men in general population (percentage in agreement with statement)	Incarcerated men (percentage in agreement with statement)	Men in general population (percentage in agreement with statement)
Men should know how to handle a gun	76%	79%	76%	70%
Men are more successful with women if one has a gun	17.7%	22.9%	28.5%	31.1%
Having a gun makes a house safer	44%	43%	48.5%	50.3%
Guns mean greater risk to life	87%	77%	87%	83%
Guns should be used only if required by the job (e.g. police or security)	72.5%	48.7%	60.5%	55.3%

The findings thus show an ambivalent and partly critical stance towards gun ownership, with the incarcerated population often being more critical. This may allow for openings for working on the linkages between masculinities, gun ownership, use and abuse.

Programmatic and policy recommendations

In addition to the recommendations of the CariMAN report itself (see Annex), there are several potential complimentary avenues for further research, programmatic and policy work. It should be noted that for policies and programming to be as effective as possible, they should ideally occur simultaneously and in a mutually reinforcing manner. The three broad areas identified are

- Further research,
- Community-level programming, and

³³ Expert interviews December 2022.

- State policies and state actor approaches.

Any work based on the findings needs to be cognisant of the different historical experiences of the particular communities – be it in terms of particular neighbourhoods, socio-economic classes or their ethnic or religious background – which some of the targeted men and boys come from, which may include past grievances as well as real or perceived marginalisation. Not accounting for these dynamics risks potential backlash and other unintended consequences for programming.

Research

In terms of possible future research based on the CariMAN data, there are three possible avenues which can mutually reinforce each other:

- **Re-visiting** the current data for other patterns;
- Building on **entry points** in the data to probe further; and
- Explore further some of the **findings more tangentially linked** to masculinities and criminal violence.

The research suggested below should ideally be designed to directly inform future programming.

Re-visiting the data: The existing data from the CariMAN IMAGES survey can be revisited to further examine in more detail links between particular masculinities and violent behaviour. This would also require re-visiting the survey/interview instruments to assess how much can be deduced from the data and with what degree of confidence. One pathway for further analysis would be to look in more detail at possible correlations and differences between factors such as **age and socio-economic class with gender attitudes or views on gun ownership**, and to see if there are any significant differences that emerge. Another possible approach for re-examining the data would be to use a **latent class analysis** approach to see if there are correlations between certain life experiences, attitudes, behaviours and the risk of public or private violent behaviour.³⁴ These kinds of additional analyses can be helpful in designing future messaging or programming targeted at different demographic sub-sets of men and boys.

Building on entry points: The CariMAN findings offer some potential openings for addressing linkages between masculinities, gun ownership, violence and other issues such as controlling behaviour. The data, as discussed, above shows **discrepancies between relatively equal gender attitudes** held by men along with a condemnation of violence against women, yet simultaneously also practices which go against these stated values. These differences may stem from a number of factors, including social desirability bias. These factors may include gaps between aspirational values and lived realities; a misunderstanding of what constitutes GBV and a possible attendant trivialisation and normalisation of certain violent acts as ‘not *really* being violence’; as well as patriarchal norms and men’s pervasive sense of entitlement to controlling women’s lives ‘justifying’ acts of GBV in practice, even if violence against women is condemned in theory.³⁵ Nonetheless, these differences between attitudes and practices should be probed further with men and boys to better establish entry points to reinforce these positive attitudes, keeping in mind possible differences between men of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds. Based on the data, there is also an emerging need to further probe what men consider to be GBV, especially in terms of controlling or verbally/emotionally abusive behaviour. Another area of potential research would be to examine **emerging differences in men’s attitudes to firearms**, discussed in Table 1 above, in more detail not only to

³⁴ For an example of such an approach, see Jewkes, Rachel et al. (2020) Masculinities and Violence: Using Latent Class Analysis to Investigate the Origins and Correlates of Differences between Men in the Cross-sectional UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific, *Journal of Global Health*, 10(2).

³⁵ See also Kerrigan (2019) and Hosein et al. (2018).

better understand drivers of gun ownership and use but also the ambivalences in the attitudes toward them, and understand how these might differ between men of different ages, socio-economic groups and location.

Other research areas: While not necessarily directly related to masculinities and criminal violence, a potentially striking finding was the **high number of incarcerated men living with disabilities** in both countries. Unfortunately, the survey did not distinguish between types of disabilities, though due to research ethics constraints, participants with severe cognitive impairments or who otherwise would not have been able to independently participate in the research would have been excluded. Furthermore, it is not clear when the person obtained the disability and whether the disability was related to the offence for which the man was incarcerated. While this may only be tangentially related to masculinities and criminal violence, it is an area that may warrant further research in terms of understanding risk and vulnerabilities of men living with disabilities.

Individual-, Family- and Community-level programming

Potential programming interventions can take place at different levels, targeting individuals, families/couples, peer groups as well as broader communities. Ideally, following a **socio-ecological model** approach, work promoting change should happen simultaneously at different levels, with each reinforcing the other. Engagement with men needs to be closely contextualised and tailored. For example, messaging and programming targeting men's gun ownership and use would need to look different for adolescent men at risk of joining gangs in socio-economically marginalised neighbourhoods compared to middle-aged, middle class gun owners who see themselves as protectors of their families.³⁶

Global evidence on working with men and boys on addressing root causes of gender inequality and violence reduction has shown the utility of **peer-to-peer work, using relatable and respected role models, building on and reinforcing pre-existing positive values, and promoting positive deviance** from gender unequal and violent behaviour. Entry points include **positive fatherhood/parenting programmes for young fathers, sports, faith-based organisations as well as economic empowerment and livelihoods programming**. It is, however, important to ensure that these interventions directly centre the work on targeting root causes, rather than focus primarily on say sports or vocational training (see Text Box, 'Gendered violence reduction approaches in the region', below). It is also essential to monitor implementation continuously to ensure that interventions do not inadvertently reinforce harmful norms and behaviours, and to support change processes through longer-term mentorship beyond the intervention itself. For those men who have partners, joint engagement with their partners has often proven effective.³⁷ Social norms change and violence prevention work with men and boys can be further enhanced by combining it with life skills training, including in particular anger and conflict management skills. Individual-, couples- and family-focused work can be successfully augmented not only by reinforcing messaging from community leaders and media but also community-wide campaigns aiming at increased social cohesion and gender norm change.³⁸

³⁶ Expert interviews December 2022. See also Handbook on Gender-Responsive Small Arms Control (2020), Small Arms Survey (2020).

³⁷ As work with couples/families, such as through the Stepping Stones/Creating Futures approach from South Africa, involves both men and women, many of the sessions are held in sex-disaggregated parallel sessions to create safer spaces for participants, with joint sessions of both men and women at strategic points in the programme.

³⁸ An often-successful approach has been the Ugandan-designed SASA! model, which can be combined with individual-/couples-/family-level interventions.

Gendered violence reduction approaches in the region

A number of local and international non-governmental organisations; multilateral agencies and international organisations such as CARICOM, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and UN agencies; as well as local and national level state actors (the role of state actors is also further discussed below) have rolled out a range of different programming approaches which seek to tackle violence through engaging with gender roles, expectations and stereotypes. These include:

- **Gun control initiatives** such as [SALIENT](#) in Jamaica and the regional [Caribbean Firearms Roadmap](#) (UNLIREC);
- **Violence-reduction initiatives** such as [Project REASON](#) (Cure Violence) in Trinidad and Tobago;
- **Child- and youth-oriented work on violence prevention** such as [Positive Deviance](#) work in Trinidad and Tobago, working through [Charge Up](#) youth clubs in Jamaica, or [End De Violence](#) (Barbados Division of Youth Affairs);
- **Peer-to-Peer engagement with violent men** such as the [Man to Man Batterer programme](#) (Grenada);
- **Gender-based violence reduction programming** such as [working with faith-based leaders](#) (Trinidad and Tobago) or [arts-based GBV prevention](#) in schools (Jamaica), and regionally under the [Spotlight Initiative](#); and
- **Positive parenting/fatherhood programmes** such as [Affirming Fatherhood](#) (CariMAN and PPC, Jamaica)

State policies and state actor approaches

The above-mentioned engagement at a personal-, family-, and community-level should ideally be linked to holistic **state policies aimed at violence reduction**, which need to work at various levels including education, social welfare, economic empowerment, promotion of gender equality and security provision. The [Mid-Term Plan](#) being developed by Jamaica's National Commission on Violence Prevention is a positive development in this direction in terms of taking a holistic, multi-sectoral approach to violence prevention. It is also important to link violence prevention policies and the work with men and boys to other policy frameworks and initiatives, such as on GBV prevention³⁹ and gender equality in possible future National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security.

The findings of the CariMAN research are in line with global research findings which show **childhood experiences of violence** – including witnessing domestic or intimate partner violence, as well as school bullying – increased the likelihood of one's own perpetration of violence in later life as well as vulnerability to being drawn into criminal activities. These findings highlight the need for preventing both violence against children and between parents, as well as better response services for children affected by violence. Prevention must also include tackling the dominant assumptions on the acceptability of physical disciplining of children evidenced by the study. Beyond direct experiences of violence, childhood and youth are also important times to engage with children and adolescents to build their conflict and anger management skills as well as reduce their own propensity to resort to violence, as has for example been successfully piloted in schools in Barbados

A key element in reducing the ownership and potential abuse of guns by civilians who are not involved in criminal gangs is ensuring public trust in the justice and security sector.⁴⁰ This work is on-going in both countries through a variety of initiatives, and there are tentatively positive results coming out of a community policing pilot approach in Trinidad and Tobago.⁴¹ Both the on-going [SALIENT programme](#) on gun violence reduction in Jamaica and the [Gang Reduction and Community Empowerment \(GRACE\)](#) programme in Trinidad and Tobago offer possibilities for linking civil society and community-based approaches with on-going state actor programmes. While there is often an understandable call in the public and media for heavy-handed policing approaches, these run the risk of alienating targeted communities and demographics, thereby potentially exacerbating the very problems they are seeking to address.

³⁹ See, for example, Jamaica National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate GBV, and Hosein et al. (2018).

⁴⁰ Reducing civilian gun ownership also reduces the risk of legally owned guns ending up in criminal networks through theft or illegal sales.

⁴¹ See, for example, Johnson, Devon, Edward R. Maguire and Joseph B. Kuhns (2022) Can Community Policing Reduce Perceived Disorder? Results from a Quasi-experiment in Trinidad and Tobago, *Policing and Society*, 32:7, 911-930.

Further possible measures at the state level are tighter regulations for firearms, in particular barring previously abusive men from obtaining a gun licence and having their licence revoked in cases of possible GBV, threatening or controlling behaviour. However, these measures only go so far, as both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have, globally speaking, moderate levels of civilian-owned registered firearms which could be controlled through such measures, but comparatively high levels of illegally trafficked firearms.⁴²

Conclusion

The CariMAN research on masculinities and violence in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago presents a rich set of findings which both add to a better understanding of these issues in the two countries as well as echoing the findings of other research. This policy brief presents some of the key findings of the research in addition to highlighting further findings on gender norms held by the men surveyed and interviewed, including on GBV and gun ownership. The CariMAN findings are augmented by a desk-based review of relevant literature and several background expert interviews.

The policy brief recommends further action on these issues in both countries, including:

- Further research on particular trends between different men and their attitudes to gender norms and violence;
- Action-oriented research on better understanding entry points with different men and women for work on transforming these norms;
- Use the findings to develop holistic approaches to gender-norm change and violence prevention, building on successful approaches from the two countries and elsewhere in the region; and
- Link these efforts with other initiatives, programmes, strategies and action plans being implemented by the governments of the two countries.

⁴² Alpers, Philip and Michael Picard. 2022. Guns in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago: Rate of Civilian Firearm Possession per 100 Population. On illegal firearms in Jamaica, see, for example, <https://insightcrime.org/news/jamaica-hatches-new-plan-seize-illegal-guns-murders-soar/>.

Annex 1: CariMAN Key Findings and Recommendations⁴³

Jamaica

Key Results:

- Incarcerated men tend to be younger and single when compared to the general population of Jamaican men. The average age (median) for Jamaican men was 36 and for the incarcerated males was 33.5. Single men were 3.4 times more likely to be incarcerated when compared to married men.
- Incarcerated men had lower levels of education. Incarcerated Jamaican had lower rates of completed primary education, completed secondary education, and completed technical/vocational education.
- According to the latest government estimates, 15% of Jamaican are living with disabilities (The World Bank, 2016). Men with a disability were 3.3 times more likely to be incarcerated compared to men who are not disabled.
- Men who during their childhood lived with both parents, a parent or a family member adult are less likely to be incarcerated. Men who lived with an adult caregiver before they were 18 were 38 time less likely to end up behind bars.
- A common feature throughout the emerging themes on constructions of masculinity, is a man's relationship with his children. Responsibility, provider/protector, fatherhood and role modeling are all linked to a man's relationship with his children. This was also a dominant view expressed in the survey. Although most men believed household chores were the domain of women, they held more equitable views on childcare and were more likely to be more involved in activities related to raising their children, especially disciplining children. Jamaican men who talked to their children about a personal issue were 40 times less likely to be incarcerated, while men who helped their children with homework were 5 times less likely to be incarcerated. Men who took care of their children when they were sick were 9.8 times less likely to be in prison.
- Men who held positive attitudes toward gender violence were more likely to be incarcerated. Men who stated that there are reasons or times when a woman deserves to be beaten were 1.5 times more likely to be incarcerated. Further, men who believed that a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together were 1.8 times more likely to be in jail.
- Within-household relations play an important role in men's lives. Men who defined the relationship with their romantic partners as good or very good were 45 times less likely to be incarcerated.
- Jamaican men who said that they would like to have a gun were 1.3 times more likely to be incarcerated. At the same time, the likelihood of incarceration increased 1.5 times for men who believed that guns stimulate crime.

⁴³ This annex is taken from the draft Cariman report, submitted the FCDO in September 2022, so has not been copy edited to keep it true to original text.

Recommended Policy Actions

Outcome 1. Reduced incidence of violence in the home through access to family support services that incorporate gender transformative approaches for healthy family functioning for the benefit of men, women, children and families				
Strategy	Key activities/ Outputs	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Costs
Strengthen government family support systems (National)	1.1 Effective family support services that incorporate gender transformative approaches delivered through Government agencies and CSOs	Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Family Services Unit), Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA), National Parenting Commission (Parenting Places)	Relevant NGOs e.g., Parenting Partners Caribbean/CariMAN	FSU, CPFSA, Parenting Places and partner NGOs staff capacity building.
Strengthen male support system/networks (National/community)	1.2. Expand male support services that include gender transformative approaches	Bureau of Gender affairs, Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA)	NGO partners, i.e. Coalition in Support of Adolescent Leadership (CSALT)), Men of God Against Violence and Abuse (MoGAVA), CPFSA, Jamaica Mental Health Advocacy Network (JaMHAN) and AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), CariMAN	Cost linked to establishing/expanding Government male counselling services and facilitating access to suitably qualified NGO male support groups.
Increase awareness of family counselling/support services (National/community)	1.3 Design and implement national and community awareness campaigns on family counselling/support services offered by the Government	FSU, CPFSA, BGA	NGO partners	Costs linked to design and implementation of awareness raising campaigns.
Increase awareness of male counselling/support services (National/community)	1.4 Design and implement a national awareness campaign on male counselling/support services offered by the Government and NGOs.	FSU, CPFSA, BGA		Costs linked to design and implementation of awareness raising campaigns.

Outcome 2. Reduced incidence of violence/incidents of conflict in schools.				
Strategy	Key activities/ Outputs	Responsibility	Co-responsibility.	Costs
Increase student behaviour management effectiveness in schools(National)	2.1 Implement effective positive behavioural support systems, that incorporate gender transformative approaches within primary and secondary schools	The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MEYI);		Costs linked to ensuring all teachers are trained in and supported (including through JTC) through their application of gender transformative approaches.

	2.2 Establish/ expand peer mediation systems in schools that utilize gender transformative approaches	MEYI		Training of teachers in peer mediation that incorporates gender transformative approaches.
Increase in-school opportunities to critically examine gender norms and expectations pertaining to expressions of violence (National)	2.3 Adapt HFLE curriculum to include consistent age/ developmentally appropriate discussion of gender norms and expressions re: expressions of violence	MEYI	Appropriate NGOs	Costs linked to HFLE syllabus adaptation, teacher training, review of the academic curriculum.

Outcome 3. Reduced incidence of interpersonal violence within communities

Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Costs
Strengthen community policing interventions (National/community)	3.1 Increase effectiveness of community policing in reducing community violence through the incorporation of gender transformative approaches	Ministry of National Security (MNS), Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF)/ National Police Youth Club Council of Jamaica (NPYCCJ)		Costs linked to the evaluation and potential adaptation of PYC programming and expansion of programming including capacity building of Police Youth Clubs, encompassing the delivery of a basic structured curriculum that includes the critical examination of gender norms and explores and models peacebuilding masculinities, thereby reflecting /reinforcing what is practiced in the school system.
Use sport as a vehicle for the implementation of gender transformative approaches	3.2 Strengthen Government and CSO community-based sports programming through the incorporation of gender transformative approaches	Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport (MCGES)	Relevant CSOs	Sports programming review and revision, training of programme implementers.
Reduce gang membership (Community)	3.3 Strengthen community-based Government and CSO youth programming that incorporates gender transformative approaches where appropriate	MEYI: Youth and Adolescents Policy Division (YAPD); Youth Innovation Centres (YICs)	NGO partners (non-government youth clubs)	Capacity building of YAPD and YIC Youth Empowerment Officers and NGO youth club personnel and programming.
	3.4 Implement interventions that challenge social norms (encompassing gender norms) related to gang membership	MEYI	Appropriate NGO/ consultant	For gang membership disruption intervention, personnel with the requisite qualifications and experience in shifting social norms are required.
Introduce gender transformative approaches into prisoner programming	3.5 Relevant CSOs implement interventions underpinned by gender transformative approaches within the prison population			Costs linked to engagement of relevant CSO.

Trinidad and Tobago

Key Results:

- Incarcerated men were significantly younger than men representing general population. The average (median) age of incarcerated males was 34 in comparison with 39 of men representing general population.
- Men with disability are twice more likely to be incarcerated.
- Incarcerated males have lower levels of education. The majority of men in general population completed secondary school or higher (77.8%). Among them, technical/vocational education (10.6%) or completed a university (24.8%). The majority of incarcerated males did not complete secondary school (58.3%). Only 28.1 completed secondary school; 6% completed technical/vocational education; and only 3% completed a university.
- Muslims are disproportionally represented among incarcerated males. Majority of GP Are Christian (48.6%), Catholic (15%) or Atheist/Agnostic (10.7%). The majority of PP are Christian (37.7%), Muslim (21.7%) Rastafari (9.7%) or Shouter Baptist (9.7%).
- Men of general population work at better jobs. Significant percentage of GP are professional (33.9%), own a business (13.7%) or work in construction (14%). The majority of PP are artisan/tradesmen (25%), work in farming (14.6%) or worked in construction (39.6%).
- The men's views and opinions on gender equality did not differ significantly between the sample of men representing the general population and the incarcerated males. However, more men in prison believed that a man needs more than one sexual partner, even if he already has a partner.
- Childhood experiences matter! Boys who were involved in violence before age 18 are incarcerated in greater numbers compared to general population of men. Men who lived alone prior to age 18 were 6.2 times more likely to be incarcerated as adults compared to those who lived with both parents. Men who prior to age 18 live with their mothers only compared to those who lived with both parents were 2 times more likely to end up behind bars as adults. Finally, men who lived as children with an adult family member other than their mother or father were 2.3 times more likely to be incarcerated as adults compared to men who lived with their mothers and fathers.
- Men who as children were forced to have sex with someone were 1.7 times more likely to be imprisoned as adults.
- Attitudes Toward Women Matter! Men who got angry if their partner talked to other men were 4.5 times more likely to be in prison. Men who saw woman's most important role to take care of the household and cook for her family were 1.5 times less likely to be in prison. Respondents who hit, kicked, beaten, choked, pushed or burned their partner were 8 times more likely to be in prison.
- Men who were likely to interfere when they saw a friend using violence against women were 7.3 times more likely to be in prison.

Recommended Policy Actions

Outcome 1. Families actively practice non-violent approaches to conflict/potential situations of conflict as a result of effective support services including parenting.

Strategy	Key activities/ Outputs	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Costs
Strengthen government family support systems (National)	1.1 Implement programs that educate parents to create safe, nurturing environments, free of physical punishment & humiliation through the promotion of early childhood gender socialization in the home by encouraging healthy masculine behaviours & identities.	National Family Services (NFS) in the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS).	NGOs including women’s rights and feminist led organizations	NFS recruitment costs, additional human resource costs as a result of NFS staff expansion, training costs re: capacity building of partner NGOs.
Strengthen male support system/ networks (National/community)	1.2. Expand male (and female) focused support services that facilitate violent and aggressive behaviour change (how to appropriately express and regulate emotions)	MSDFS, MOH, OPM(GCA),	NGOs including women’s rights and feminist led organizations	Cost linked to establishing/expanding counselling services for men, to include gender transformative approaches, at all Health Centres and facilitating access to suitably qualified/trained NGO male support groups.
Increase access to family counselling /support services (National/community)	1.3 Raise awareness of and strengthen the provision of and engagement in family support services that address men’s views on gender & sexual relations including restrictive masculinities.	OPM(communications), MSDFS	NGOs	Costs linked to design and implementation of awareness raising campaigns.
Increase access to male counselling/support services (National/community)	1.4 Raise awareness of and strengthen the provision of and engagement in male support services that address men’s views on gender & sexual relations including restrictive masculinities.	OPM(communications), MSDFS		Costs linked to design and implementation of awareness raising campaigns.

Outcome 2. Socially inclusive school environments, attuned to the issues of masculinities, actively enabling the consistent practice of non-violent behaviours and appropriate gender norms.

Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Responsibility	Co-responsibility.	Costs
Increase student behaviour management effectiveness in schools(National)	2.1 Implement effective positive behavioural support systems that utilise gender-transformative approaches within primary and secondary schools	MOE		Costs linked to ensuring all teachers are trained and supported in their application of positive behaviour management approaches that include gender transformative approaches.
	2.2 Establish/ expand peer mediation systems in schools	MOE		Training of teachers in peer mediation under-pinned by gender-transformative approaches.
Increase in-school opportunities to critically examine gender norms and expressions in	2.3 Increase school populations’ awareness of masculinities and its role in avoiding harmful gender norms and preventing involvement in violent crime.	MoE	Appropriate NGOs including women’s rights and	Costs linked to HFLE syllabus and wider curricula review, subsequent adaptation, and teacher training.

expressions of violence (National)			feminist led organisations	
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Outcome 3. Reduced incidence of interpersonal violence within communities

Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Responsibility	Co-responsibility.	Costs
Strengthen community policing interventions (National/community)	3.1 Increase effectiveness of community violence prevention interventions involving police youth clubs and community policing initiatives delivering a curriculum that includes awareness of and deconstruction of masculinities and addresses the gun culture.	Ministry of National Security (MNS), TTPS		Costs linked to the evaluation and potential subsequent revision of the Hearts and Minds program and expansion of community policing programme encompassing capacity building of Police Youth Clubs to include the delivery of a basic structured curriculum that offers the critical examination of gender norms and explores and models peacebuilding masculinities.
Strengthen Military Led Academic Training Programme (MILAT) programme to challenge gender norms and expectations	3.2 Incorporate and subsequently deliver gender transformative approaches within the MILAT curriculum	MNS	Relevant CSO	Costs associated with programme review, programme revision and training of instructors in the implementation of gender transformative approaches.
Reduce gang membership(Community)	3.3 Implement community violence interruption programmes that utilize street outreach; public education; faith-leader involvement, community mobilization, and collaboration with law enforcement.	MNS, TTPS,	Cure Violence (Chicago)	Costs linked to the re-establishment of Project Reason
	3.4 Implement proven, effective gang social norm, including gun culture, disruption interventions.	MSDFS, OPM(GCA)	Appropriate NGO/consultant	For such an intervention, personnel with the requisite qualifications and experience in shifting social norms are required.
	3.5 Implement community programmes that utilize street outreach; public education; faith-leader involvement, community mobilization, and collaboration with law enforcement.	MNS	Appropriate NGO/Consultant	Costs linked to the review of the programme and the potential incorporation of gender transformative approaches.
Strengthen Prison Service rehabilitation programming	3.6 Strengthen rehabilitative programming through the incorporation of gender transformative approaches	Trinidad and Tobago Prison service	Relevant NGOs including women's rights and feminist led organizations	Costs linked to review of rehabilitative programming to find appropriate entry points for the application of gender transformative approaches, and the training of instructors in the application of gender transformative approaches.

