

POLICY BRIEF

National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme (Green Paper)

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The 2016 Caribbean Human Development Report tells us that “the degree of vulnerability of individuals varies according to dimensions such as social class, place of residence, gender age, sexual orientation, disability and lifestyle among other factors” (UNDP, 2016: 53). It is argued that these conditions “put people at risk of getting poor, destitute, abandoned, sick and so on.” The UNDP report distinguishes between outcomes of vulnerability, that is, how does status impact living standards and determinants of vulnerability, those factors that can strengthen or weaken individual’s capacity to cope with risks. In the first instance, it is argued that outcomes of vulnerability require curative policies such as cash transfers to low-income families or health treatment for the disabled. The second group requires preventative policies that weaken risk factors and strengthen protective ones, like family, community and school, to boost capacity and strengthen resilience of individuals (Ibid, 53-54). The report suggests that successful policies should be able to mitigate risk factors, strengthen protective and resilience capacity of individuals and address intersectional vulnerabilities over life cycles – from pregnancy to adulthood. These measures provide a lens through which we might assess the National Policy on Poverty of Jamaica.

Policy Overview

The National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme (NPP & NPRP) are intended to create a framework for implementation, coordination and monitoring of measures to address poverty and vulnerability in Jamaica. The policy aims to provide a “framework for addressing poverty, inclusive of principles, vision, goals, objectives, strategies, institutional and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.” The programme “outlines the parameters for delivery and provides focused interventions, strategies, and actions towards achieving the policy goals

over the medium term (2015-2018) and longer term (2030)" (Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC), 2016: 9). Their overall aim is to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce absolute poverty in Jamaica. This relates especially to those below the poverty line of J\$143,687 at 2012. The government, through the policy and programme, hopes to empower people, build resilience at the national, community, household and individual levels to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty (MEGJC, 2016: 15). The Vision guiding the NPP is that: "Every Jamaican is consuming goods and services above the minimum acceptable national standards, and has equal and equitable opportunities and support to achieve and maintain income security and improved quality of life" (MEGJC, 2016:10). Its emphasis on income and consumption represents a limited view of poverty and reflects narrow thinking on what is possible or desirable. It is also not clear what the minimum acceptable standards are or who are the standard makers. The 2016 Caribbean Human Development Report gives an alternative context for thinking about poverty. It states:

Many Caribbean people perceive poverty as the: (i) inability to send children to school because of lack of food, lack of clothing, the inability to purchase school books and pay for public transport; (ii) hunger and going without food in order to meet other inescapable expenses; (iii) underemployment or lack of decent work; (iv) inadequate dwelling space; (v) constrained choices; and (vi) survival from day to day.

These findings expand the range of determinants of poverty beyond wage income and its underlying influences and bring sharply into focus the demographic factors and conditions of life which are amenable to social engineering. (UNDP, 2016: 103)

If visions represent how we imagine possibilities and establish frameworks through which to address problems at hand, the NPP's vision presents a limited context for change in Jamaica. Using Caribbean people's understanding of poverty quoted here, its vision would speak to questions of how to move people out of survival mode, how not to worry about illness as a route to poverty, how to create dignity in work, how to expand choice or how to get from one side of the island to another in pursuit of leisure, even for those who do not have significant economic resources. The NPP is not so engineered however. It emphasizes institution building, rather than the protection of people, it blames victims of poverty through a culture of poverty approach and there is no broad view of poverty reduction as based in the

creation of opportunities that might have a generational impact, such as through transformation of the education system.

This NPP is focused on those who fell within the national poverty prevalence rate of 19.9% in 2012. However, the situational analysis also identifies 4.2% of the population as vulnerable to falling into poverty, consuming only 10% above the poverty line. It identifies a problem of inequality, where 50% of Jamaican households account for only 24.4% of consumption expenditure compared to 75.6% consumed by the other half. In addition to the official poverty statistics, the School to Work Transition Survey carried out by STATIN, the PIOJ and the ILO showed that 39.9% of youth (ages 15-29) consider themselves to be poor (MEGJC, 2016:18). This suggests that the scope of poverty in Jamaica is significantly beyond the purview of the policy.

Determinants of poverty are named as low educational attainment, low income earning capability, inability to access basic social services, lack of economic opportunities leading to underemployment, unemployment and low wage employment, poor rural development impacting the opportunities and livelihoods of rural households and high levels of risk due to natural hazards. The NPP also claims there are “psycho-social, cultural, and normative features of society that perpetuate poverty. Consultations with key stakeholders revealed that these norms and practices include beliefs associated with childbearing and the definition of gender roles” (MEGJC, 2016: 20).

Principles

The NPP is guided by the following principles:

Respect for Human Rights: The policy acknowledges the inalienable fundamental human rights and dignity of all citizens under the Jamaican Constitution, and in keeping with international covenants of which Jamaica is a signatory.

Inclusive and Participatory Development: The coordination of national efforts on poverty shall include the partnership of multiple stakeholders in Government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as poor and vulnerable persons, at the national and sub-national levels. Gender and disability considerations will be mainstreamed throughout. This guiding principle embodies the concept of “no one left behind” as is embraced and promoted under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development.

Shared Prosperity: The achievement of shared prosperity for all levels of the society through sustainable economic growth that facilitates the participation in viable livelihood opportunities and the benefits of national development in order to counteract vulnerability and inequality, and social exclusion.

Equitable Access to Basic Goods and Services: Using the Rights-based Approach, the Policy seeks to ensure fair and objective delivery of basic social services to all citizens, in particular the most vulnerable. The policy also enshrines the efficient and effective delivery of public goods and services to all citizens.

Evidence-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): The Policy promotes strong systems for monitoring, evaluating, and strengthening programmes while utilizing relevant research, data and best practices to improve systems and programmes.

Transparency and Accountability: Processes to define, develop, and review policy and programme parameters are in keeping with approved formats and accountable procedures. The Policy also promotes clear ownership of responsibility on the part of the Government and its partners for the implementation of the National Poverty Reduction Programme.

Sustainable Development Approaches: The Policy recognizes the importance of the natural environment to sustainable livelihoods and development, and therefore promotes environmental stewardship through sustainable management and use of natural resources and increasing capacity to adapt to climate change. (MEGJC, 2016: 22-23)

The principles of the NPP are in keeping with the current language of good governance and sustainable development. Good policies it is thought, must be driven by human rights, inclusivity, transparency and accountability, must be evidence-based, have monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and must be sustainable. Equitable access to goods and services is seen to be in keeping with an emphasis on human rights. We can question in the first instance, what is to be gained by a human rights approach to the problem of poverty? The promise of universality is an important one in addressing inequities within societies but human rights are difficult to enforce, particularly where social, economic and cultural rights are largely excluded from the Jamaica Constitution. Only the right of children to state-funded education at the pre-primary and primary levels is protected. In that regard, a social welfare approach, seen in the Caribbean in the "Barbados Model"

of economic development might provide more fitting principles for a policy aimed at addressing poverty. At its base, welfare economics is concerned to provide a flooring to all within the society and thus represents a measure against poverty.

At the same time, there are limitations in the NPP's human rights scope. While it names vulnerable groups as children, persons with disabilities, the homeless, the elderly and the working poor, (Ibid) the NPP does not advance special agendas for these groups. Further the limitations of its human rights approach are evidenced in its lack of gender sensitivity or attention to groups like lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons. It does not for instance consider the differentiated realities of women - their lower status in the labour market, or boys - their low educational achievement as a route to poverty. It does not address intersectional gendered realities - such as the case of older women being at greater risk of poverty. Given the higher life expectancy of women, they are more likely to suffer disabilities in old age and are at greater risk of poverty given their concentration in low paid jobs in earlier life. Since women earned less, they made smaller pensions contributions and get smaller pensions in old age. At the same time, women benefit from more family support (UNDP, 2016: 55). Such considerations of combined vulnerabilities are not addressed in the NPP. Indeed, the discrimination faced by people with disabilities or LGBT persons or the exclusion and isolation faced by the elderly are in and of themselves a source of poverty. They prevent access to social goods and impact people's security. In the case of access to HIV and other sexual and reproductive health (SRH) service provision and delivery for instance, barriers to access emerge from stigma and discrimination; a lack of privacy and confidentiality; limited gender sensitive and adolescent-friendly legislation and policies; and limited knowledge and understanding of rights and available services (Ministry of Health (MOH), 2015: 43). The case of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men points to the relationship between discrimination, violation of rights, exclusion, poverty and vulnerability. The HIV prevalence rate within this group is 32%. The MOH notes that:

Social vulnerability, marginalisation, social exclusion due to dominant heteronormativity and other underlying determinants continue to drive the [HIV]epidemic among the MSM population. Many become homeless due to family rejection, social rejection, being ostracised from their communities, and victimization through violence, threats and abuse. This situation leads to high risk survival sex, sex work and situational sex. Those who had ever been

homeless, victims of physical violence and from lower socio-economic strata were at an elevated risk of up to 48%. (MOH, 2015, 45).

Vulnerability is therefore both a result of and results in discrimination (UNDP, 2016: 56). In this sense “the need to combat discrimination and to focus on special vulnerable groups” is core to meaningful policy (Ibid).

Within the framework set up by the NPP, is the question of the role of the state. In an environment in which the state is circumscribed to role of facilitator, the NPP is marked by the minimalist role given to the state. This is reflected in its emphasis on acting as a facilitator in partnership with the private sector and civil society, in providing an enabling legislative environment and in playing a monitoring rather than interventionist role in poverty reduction. Among the main problems identified are: poor targeting, inadequacy of benefits, cost effectiveness, lack of sustainability and institutional capacity for effective implementation (MEGJC, 2016:11). The policy advances a limited role for the state, one of facilitator. The emphasis of the policy is therefore on the coordinating role of the state within a network of collaborations and on monitoring and evaluation. It does not advance new poverty fighting mechanisms but lists already functioning activities as part of the strategy. These include:

construction of community infrastructure such as roads and schools, divestment of lands under favourable terms and conditions, water and sanitation projects, rural electrification, climate change adaptation and disaster resilience and skills building, to cash transfers, residential care and employment programmes, education, training and apprenticeship programmes, health care and insurance programmes as well as nutrition support. (MEGJC, 2016:16).

The Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) is identified as “the main programme aimed at poverty reduction (MEGJC, 2016: 20). The policy posits that desired, “sustainable and positive” outcomes are unlikely to be reached given fragmentation and inadequate provisions for measuring programmes (MEGJC, 2016:16). It identifies duplication of efforts, wastage, poorly designed initiatives and fragmentation to be features of efforts. Consequently, accountability is deemed a problem. The policy states that there is “limited accountability for poverty prevalence” because of the absence of a governance framework and monitoring and evaluation (MEGJC, 2016:16). There is no data

made available to show whether corruption is the problem in poverty prevalence but the policy seems to assume this. This perspective is attached to the expected intermediate outcomes of the Policy. These are:

- Institutional framework for poverty reduction coordination established and strengthened at national and sub-national levels.
- Legislative environment that supports sustainable poverty reduction facilitated and strengthened.
- A framework of cooperation and coordination among government and non-government partners towards poverty reduction outcomes at national and sub-national levels established.

Policy Objectives

Policy objectives are outlined as:

- 1: Strengthen social safety nets to address extreme poverty-induced deprivations (including hunger).
- 2: Promote and expand human capital development among the poor and vulnerable (including children and persons with disabilities).
- 3: Enhance income security among the poor and vulnerable.
- 4: Enhance food and nutrition security of the poor.
- 5: Strengthen basic social and physical infrastructure within poor rural and urban communities.
- 6: Address psychosocial, cultural and normative influences on poverty.
- 7: Strengthen coordination and capacity building among key stakeholders for poverty reduction. (MEGJC, 2016: 24).

Under objective 1, the policy outlines that “it is the right of every citizen to have access to basic social services in order to have his/her basic needs met, and recognizing the responsibility of the Government in facilitating an adequate quality of life for those deprived of familial and other support”, responsibility to effect those “rights” are given to “the Government and its partners” (MEGJC, 2016: 24). The emphasis on partnership here, highlights the limitations the state sets itself in providing social safety nets. It also imposes a clear limitation on its beneficiaries as “those deprived of familial and other support”. Basic needs are not therefore generally seen as the “right” of all Jamaicans. The main role of the government is to act as a “facilitator” in enacting legislation, facilitating institutional care for the most vulnerable, and facilitating programmes and interventions in climatic events.

In this regard, the priority of the state is access to basic amenities, public services and public facilities, and conditional income transfers to the poor. (Ibid). The only such existing programme is PATH. 13.7% of the population are beneficiaries of PATH, the majority being children. The Policy is informed by the view that "PATH has an important role in improving living conditions of households", increasing school attendance and health care. (MEGJC, 2016: 80). At the same time, PATH benefits per capita represent 12% of per capita related expenditures. Similarly, NIS pensions benefit is less than half the minimum wage. (MEGJC, 2016, 83). Elderly beneficiaries of PATH received only \$1,725 per month in 2015 (MEGJC, 2016, 19). This represents a meagre contribution to reducing poverty. It can be compared to the National Minimal Wage, raised to J\$6200 per week in 2016, which does not represent a living wage but is above the poverty line. In a presentation entitled "Women and the Care Economy", Joan French calculates the value of PATH through an informant called Karen: "Me jus use it fi buy toilet paper fi mek sure me nuh run outta dat. It ca'an buy nutten else!" (French, 2014, Unpublished).

Under building human capital, the policy gives no indication of how it will expand opportunities to "prevent intergenerational transmission of poverty" (MEGJC, 2016: 25). It emphasizes early and well managed interventions, referrals for training, the facilitation of certification and that employment transition be built into training modules (Ibid). There is no indication of what these training opportunities might be or how these populations might be absorbed into the economy. Objective 3 does seek to address that area. It commits to existing measures such as periodic adjustment to the Minimum Wage, inclusion in NIS, improved access to water, land titling, overseas employment (popularly known as Farm Work) and productive use of underutilized agricultural land. These measures have been important to alleviating poverty in Jamaica up to the present but are not routes to social mobility. A significant incongruity here rests in the expansion of access to water since the government has made public overtures towards the privatization of water.

The NPP also commits to providing access to business development services, micro finance and social enterprise options, build capacity in non-traditional industries, information and training in financial literacy, promoting insurance, and opportunities and support for income generation for the elderly (Ibid). Some of these initiatives do not seem directed to those at the bottom and suggest either that the policy is out of sync with realities at the bottom, such as the likelihood of the poor accessing insurance or being able to make use of business development

services or that the measures are not aimed at those below the poverty line.

In order to enhance food and nutrition security, the NPP commits to initiating programmes for the supply of food to the food poor across the life cycle, to deal with malnutrition, emergency needs for food and for the promotion of healthy eating and lifestyles. (MEGJC, 2016: 26-27). For food producers, the Policy commits increased support for subsistence farming, to address praedial larceny, to expand insurance in agriculture, build capacity of small farmers to mitigate risk, including climatic ones, value chain enhancement of local produce and support infrastructure such as roads. (MEGJC, 2016: 27)

In order to strengthen basic infrastructure, the policy advances a non-discriminatory environment that facilitates equitable or equal access to basic services such as water, electricity, healthcare etc. As is the concern in Objective 3, we should ask how does this fits into the privatization of public services such as electricity and the planned divestment of the National Water Commission? Given that the policy is framed within a context of private, public partnerships, it may be hoped that these incongruities can be settled through understandings within the partnership. To this end, the policy promises the promotion of a policy environment that supports the creation of such partnerships as well as the promotion of collective responsibility for the care and maintenance of community infrastructure (MEGJC, 2016: 27). Given the recognized need for an Office of Utilities Regulation, to protect the consumer from the unending demand for profits for the electricity and telecommunications sectors, we have little reason to expect that privatizing water is in the interest of reducing poverty. It is arguable that water is the most critical basic needs of humans. Access to water impacts public health, the ease of women's care giving work in the home, farming and virtually all aspects of life. Already theft of electricity and water suggests a crisis of access in Jamaica. 180,000 of 720,000 households estimated to have electricity and 220,000 of 540,000 households estimated to have piped water through what are considered illegal connections. (JPS, 2014, 313)

With a view to meeting the objective of strengthening coordination and capacity building for poverty reduction, the policy outlines efforts to create "a single locus of responsibility", monitor programmes and poverty measurement, improve objectivity in programmes and coordinate efforts and networking among private partners and international development partners. To this end, the policy sets out

an extensive Monitoring and Evaluation framework to function within the Poverty Reduction Coordination Unit at the PIOJ. (See MEGJC, 2016: 31-35). The policy commits to additional resources for the PRCU to carry out its duties. (Ibid, 43).

Financing strategies would also include:

- Improving collection of outstanding taxes (including local property taxes)
- Tax reforms
- Imposing fines for breaches of environmental protection laws and regulations
- Maximising access to grant funding
- Building strong and sustainable partnerships with non-state sectors (NGOs, private sector, FBOs and CBOs)
- Increased prioritization of social protection (and Poverty Reduction) in the allocation of state resources, particularly in respect of the Social Protection Floor. (MEGJC, 2016:43)

It is also advanced that the state will continue to rely on financial assistance from international development partners. (Ibid, 44). These indicators point to significant reliance on non-state actors for the execution of the policy. It would be of interest to see how budgeting for these institutional mechanisms measure up against cash transfers through PATH.

Culture of Poverty Approach

The NPP takes a “Culture of Poverty” approach to the problem of poverty. That is, poverty is explained through the behaviours of the poor themselves rather than through a critique of the socio-economic structures that condition their realities. In that regard, it names measures to address what are deemed psycho-social, cultural and normative influences on poverty. It takes the view that mind-set change is needed among the poor though we are not alerted to the specifics of the problematic mind-set. And hence government and its partners shall:

- Support public education thrust to enhance knowledge, *promote mind-set change, and strengthen positive values and attitude*, while building social capital.
- Prioritize the delivery of training in citizenship values, *positive attitudes and personal responsibility*
- Identify and implement sustainable and effective strategies to socialization as an approach to addressing cultural norms, myths, mind-set and behaviours that perpetuate poverty.

- Encourage and facilitate positive mentorship and training in soft skills.
- Encourage and promote the sharing of positive values, attitudes, cultural practice, knowledge, and coping strategies among the poor, where relevant. (MEGJC, 2016: 28, Emphasis mine).

To achieve this shift in mind-set, the NPRP will provide training, education and re-socialisation on cultural norms in areas such as self-control, transfer of hope beyond circumstances, character building, overcoming limits and challenges, personal and civic responsibility as well as trust and relationship building (Ibid, 54). This type of targeting gives us a view of the poor, held by policy-makers and the state. Presumably, the poor have flawed characters, limited self-control, need to be given hope, lack personal and civic responsibility and have low trust and low skills in relationship building. No doubt, the intervention of the state is required to move them away from such negative traits so that they may lift themselves out of poverty. In addition, the state would provide training in anger management, mediation, and conflict resolution (MEGJC, 2016: 54). For parents, the state offers “training and support services in transformative parenting, coping strategies, and management of family dynamics” sine parents of the poor do not have skills for appropriate parenting. Further, the NPRP aims to provide financial education training and information for heads of households to change attitudes towards management of household resources and assist financial decision making (Ibid). For women and men who have been managing on nothing since their Emancipation from slavery in 1838, this kind of provision seems grossly out of sorts with the poverty of Jamaican families and their capacity for survival. The policy perspective and measures designed within the programme holds a negative view of the poor and their capacities for self-upliftment. Indeed, what is deemed their “cultural values” is taken to provide explanations for their poverty and become the problem the state hopes to fix.

Growth and Development

To meet the broad objectives of the policy, the NPP is attached to an economic growth model. While it advances an attachment to Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals relevant to the problem of poverty, it does not engage debate on the relationship between growth and development. The Policy takes the position that growth is necessary to address poverty. It therefore states:

Global data and experience have shown that poverty reduction results from

a strategic and concerted set of efforts that focus attention on the enabling environment for economic growth, employment and income creation. This Policy document underscores the significant influence and impact that the macro-economy will have on the success of poverty initiatives, a lesson that Jamaica's economic history has reinforced in the past decades.

The Caribbean Human Development Reports posits that there is a two-way relationship between growth and poverty. Quoting Downes, it is pointed out that:

Poverty has multiple effects on economic growth. They include levels and standards of consumption inadequate for physical and nutritional health, for safe and healthy living, for accumulation of knowledge and skills, for child care and protection and for advancement of the welfare of future generations. Furthermore, when poverty causes health problems and energy deficiency, it may contribute to irregular work and limited capacity for extended periods of work. Deficiencies in levels of education and training (resulting from nutrition induced) differences in cognitive capacity directly constrain productivity. In these various ways, human poverty may cause underachievement of productivity and economic growth. (UNDP, 2016: 103).

The Report posits further that:

employment and incomes are lower during periods of low growth. Volatility of economic growth also adversely affects employment and incomes of the majority. Social protection and social safety nets are likely to be more affordable and available during high growth. It is also likely that sustained increase in economic growth will reduce poverty in the Caribbean. (Ibid).

Critically, the Report recommends policies that can generate multiplier effects in line with efforts towards inclusive growth. In the case of the NPP, imperatives aimed at stimulating growth are named as, inter alia:

- Strengthening the legislative and policy processes to support achievement of national poverty reduction goals.
- Use of fiscally sound monetary and tax policies to stimulate growth, and to ensure equitable distribution through effective social and economic policies, and the targeting of the most vulnerable.
- Adoption of measures to improve competitiveness of local markets.
- Addressing debt accumulation and debt servicing through credible liability

management.

- Promotion of productivity and job creation, and protection from unemployment.
- Facilitating private sector investments and strategic public investments to stimulate growth.
- Strengthening systems in support of economic resilience through improved access to finance and credit opportunities, markets, and measures to reduce risks and volatility.
- Maintenance of financing for core poverty reduction initiatives identified in the National Poverty Reduction Programmes.
- Ensuring minimal negative impacts of crises and external shocks on poverty reduction gains.

Outside of prospects for job creation, which lacks specificity, these measures do not directly address the poor. More specificity may indicate how they could produce multiplier effects. They do not address the two-way relationship between poverty and growth. In the first instance, they do not consider how poverty negatively impacts possibilities for growth.

The National Poverty Reduction Programme, 2030

As with the National Policy, the NPRP prioritizes institution building and monitoring and evaluation. It is set within the long-term goals of the state, 2030 but also have medium term periods. The Medium-term Poverty Reduction Programme, 2015-2018, focuses “on empowering poor and vulnerable individuals while addressing extreme poverty, and psychosocial advancement, through a mix of household and community (both rural and urban) interventions.” Its target group during this period is the extreme (food) poor and working-age populations. There are 5 programme areas: extreme poverty and basic needs; economic empowerment and human capital development; psycho-social, cultural and normative advancement; basic community infrastructure and; institutional strengthening. The programme emphasizes the provision of food for those in extreme poverty, particularly, those defined as destitute, in food poverty, persons with disabilities and pregnant and lactating women. For the unemployed, working poor and small producers, key actions include attention to expanding access to training, certification and temporary employment. For the working poor - minimum wage adjustments, community assets for income generation and Decent Work and protection of workers. Small producers and entrepreneurs should benefit from improved road

and water infrastructure, greater access to electricity and increased access to land through divestment of government land. (MEGJC, 2016: 52) This assumes an asset base among the poor that would allow for the purchase of land. The programme also commits to facilitating access to finance, business development services, integration, NIS and environmental preservation (MEGJC, 2016: 53).

Conclusions and Recommendations

If we return to the UNDP's suggestion that successful policies should be able to mitigate risk factors, strengthen protective and resilience capacity of individuals and address intersectional vulnerabilities over life cycles - from pregnancy to adulthood, there is context to consider gaps within the Green Paper and make recommendations to alter the policy. The UNDP's analysis of variables leading to upward social mobility of groups in Jamaica showed that probability of household movement out of poverty is reduced by increases in household size, number of infant dependents, number of school age children and number of elderly family members. It showed that ownership of small assets and health insurance were not strong influences. (UNDP 2016: 111) This data represents context from which to develop strategies that mitigate risk and for building resilience. It suggests that a key policy concern of the NPP should be how to expand care for children and the elderly. If PATH is the main means of impacting the vulnerability of the poor already in the system, and it is found inadequate, its resources must be expanded. One way to achieve this is to de-emphasize institution building and expand cash transfers to the poor. The bias against the poor held within this policy in its culture of poverty approach, suggests a mistrust of how the poor that may have led it away from such thinking. In that regard, it is recommended that all sections dealing with psychosocial and cultural norms be removed from the policy document and programme. Since discrimination can lead to poverty, the policy and programme should be geared towards reducing discrimination in the society including negative attitudes towards the poor, women, the elderly, the disabled, LGBT persons and take affirmative action measures where necessary. Any programmes geared at attitude change should be national - they should address problems of contempt for the poor and their lifestyles. If the state is to invest resources in changing attitudes it should adopt public education measures geared towards engendering respect for all Jamaicans. Where there are specific issues to be addressed through public education, such as the relationship between family size and poverty, information should be made available with due sensitivity to the social practices of varied social groups. Given the relationship between family size and poverty the policy should

seek to expand access to information on sexual and reproductive health among adolescents and adults, with a view to empowering Jamaicans as sexual actors. It should seek to expand, especially girls' and women's rights to control their bodies and reproductive lives and the protections of children and adults when those rights are violated.

While PATH may be appropriately targeted at facilitating children's attendance at school, more emphasis needs to be placed on expanding educational opportunities for quality education as a route out of poverty in Jamaica. Poverty reduction strategies should therefore be tied to reducing the problem of exclusion in the education system. It should seek to address exclusions emerging from:

- Failure to integrate the mother tongue (Jamaican) in education and resultant problems of literacy and numeracy (See the work of the Jamaican Language Unit, UWI, Mona).
- The imbalance in quality of primary education and the competitive nature of access to quality secondary education which ensures that those at the bottom receive inferior education (See Shepherd, 2011).
- The imbalance in public spending on those in the top socio-economic groupings (See PREAL & CaPRI, 2012)

Education should also be seen as potentially uplifting for its recipients, as a means to building esteem. This is in direct contrast to the idea that children who are poor have negative attitudes or anger problems and their parents have poor parenting skills and need "re-socialisation". The educational curricula should at all times be subject to scrutiny as it relates to cultural specificity and esteem-building material.

If the NPP is to be credibly guided by a human rights approach, it ought to be directed towards the needs of differentiated groups and the combined vulnerabilities they face. This is insufficient however. There is also much to be gained from prioritizing the welfare of the poor as a growth strategy. Those needs ought to extend beyond protection from discrimination to the expansion of social goods. The policy is too distinctly wedded to a good governance framework which emphasizes institution building and while meaningful should be balanced with efforts that directly address the needs of people. The NPP would in this context benefit from an expanded vision tied to concrete goals to among other things expand leisure, education, health and participation in decision-making, including community control (not just maintenance) of their resources.

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