

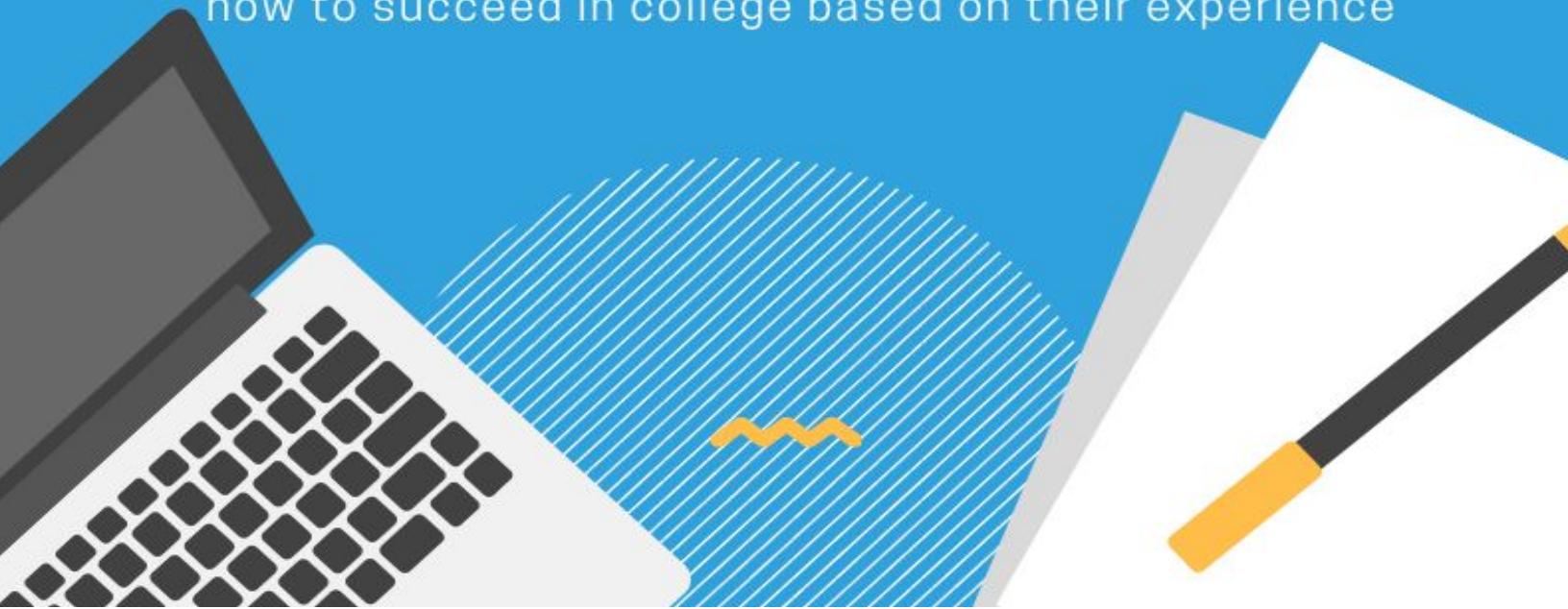


EmpowerU

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Caribbean Education and College Preparation Data Report:

A document detailing status the Caribbean education system and current college preparation for students in the Caribbean, as well as highlighting Caribbean excellence and insights from Caribbean undergrad on how to succeed in college based on their experience



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The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed herein this document do not necessarily reflect the views of EmpowerU or the island governments represented. The goal of this report is to start a conversation to improve the quality and depth of education for students in the Caribbean to fuel continued growth and excellence. Our report is subject to change as we continue to acquire more data from students; however, we wanted to share preliminary results from our findings. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply on the part of the EmpowerU any judgment of the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

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Executive Summary

EmpowerU's mission is to facilitate the empowerment of young people and promote educational and financial resources for Caribbean students to attain a tertiary education. To do so, we wanted to capture an accurate image of Caribbean education today by collecting data from current Caribbean undergraduates or recent graduates about their college preparatory experience and how that played a role in their college experience. Caribbean students are often trapped in a unique college experience due to the high level of competition applying for college as international students and the high costs of a college education with minimal to no scholarship financial aid support. This report details where globally Caribbean students are attending college, what fields they are acquiring their expertise, and the good and bad in regards to what prepared them and did not prepare them for college. The hopes of this document is to start a conversation by showing the region the importance of studies like this as well as create a clear image of the level of college preparatory education, career exposure, academic resources available to students in the Caribbean.

Introduction

The Caribbean due to its diversity has varying educational systems that create inequality in the level of education a student may receive in the region. In addition, many students are applying for college outside of the region and are receiving out of date or inaccurate information that results in a lot of headache and pain for students once they move on to college. The lack of community and resources for Caribbean students often leaves students at a significant disadvantage compared to other international students. The data collected in this survey covered current college students or recent graduates that are Caribbean natives and went to highschool in the region and includes information regarding their high school education, their college education, and their college preparatory experience.

Research

The data was collected via Google Form survey that was distributed through our various digital platform outlets including but not limited to (Instagram, Facebook, Website, and word of mouth). Use Appendix for supplement resources for research data (e.g. country 3-letter code as well as data tables for figures).

Number of Total Responses: 112

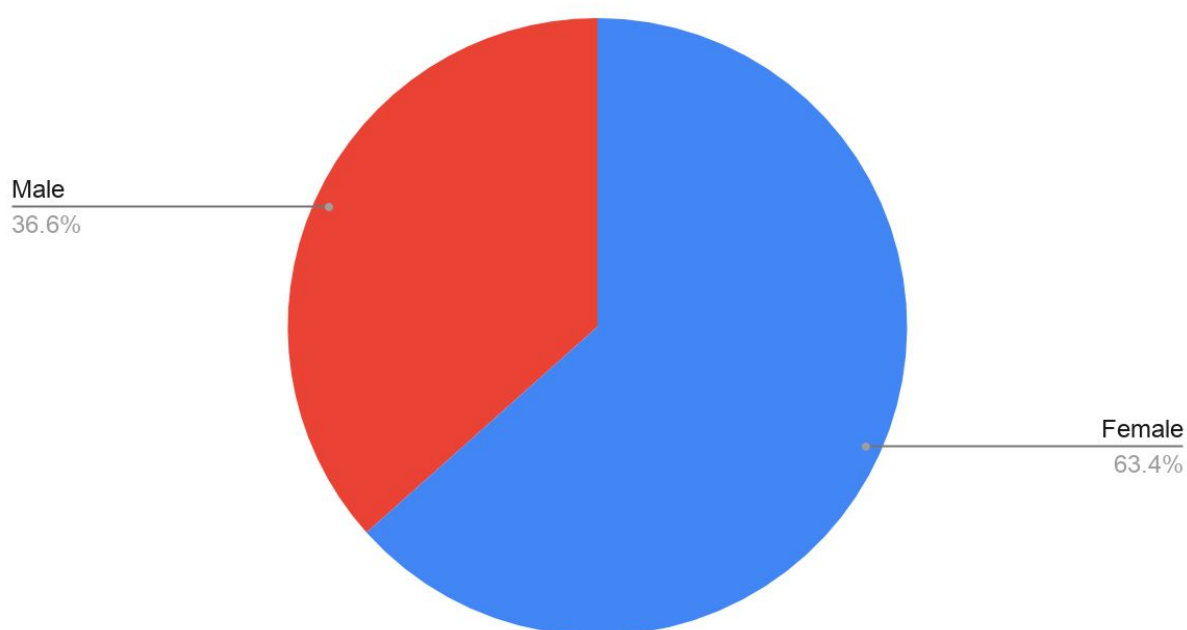
1.0 Audience Demographics

Countries of Origin	Number of Students
Anguilla (AXA)	5
Aruba (ABW)	1
Bahamas (BHS)	1
Curaçao (CUW)	3
Dominica (DMA)	3
France (FRA)	2
Guadeloupe (GLP)	2
Honduras (HND)	1
India (IND)	3
Italy (ITL)	1
Jamaica (JAM)	4
Netherlands (NLD)	7
Saint Kitts & Nevis (SKB)	2

Sint Maarten/Saint Martin (SXM)	53
St. Lucia (LCA)	2
Trinidad & Tobago (TTO)	16
United Kingdom (UK)	1
United States (USA)	4
US Virgin Islands (USVI)	1

[Table 1.0: Audience Country of Origin]

Gender Breakdown



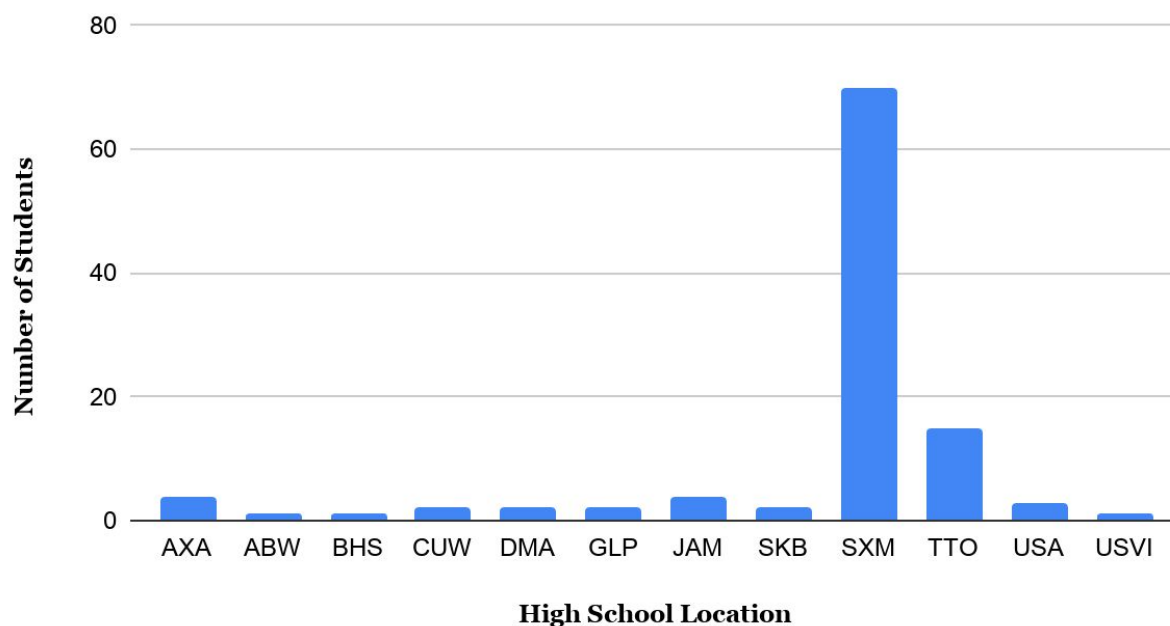
[Figure 1.0: Gender Breakdown]

High Schools Attended	Number of Students
Albena Lake-Hodge Comprehensive School	4
Aquinas College	1
Bellport High School	1
Bishop Anstey High School	1
Campion College	1
Caribbean International Academy	8
Dominica Grammar School	1

Fatima College	1
Hampton School	1
Holy Childhood High	1
Holy Name Convent, POS	2
Ibero American	1
Immaculate Conception Catholic School	2
International School of Curaçao	2
Jardin D'Essai	1
Learning Unlimited Preparatory School	26
Lycée Charles Coeffin	1
Lycée Polyvalent des Iles du Nords	1
Manchester High School	1
Milton Peters College	9
Online/Home	2
Plantation High	1
Queen's Royal College	7
Sagemont Upper School	1
Saint Mary's College	1
St. Dominic's High School	16
St. Maarten Academy	8
St. Joseph's Convent, POS	3
Tompkins High School	1
Vandercook Lake	1

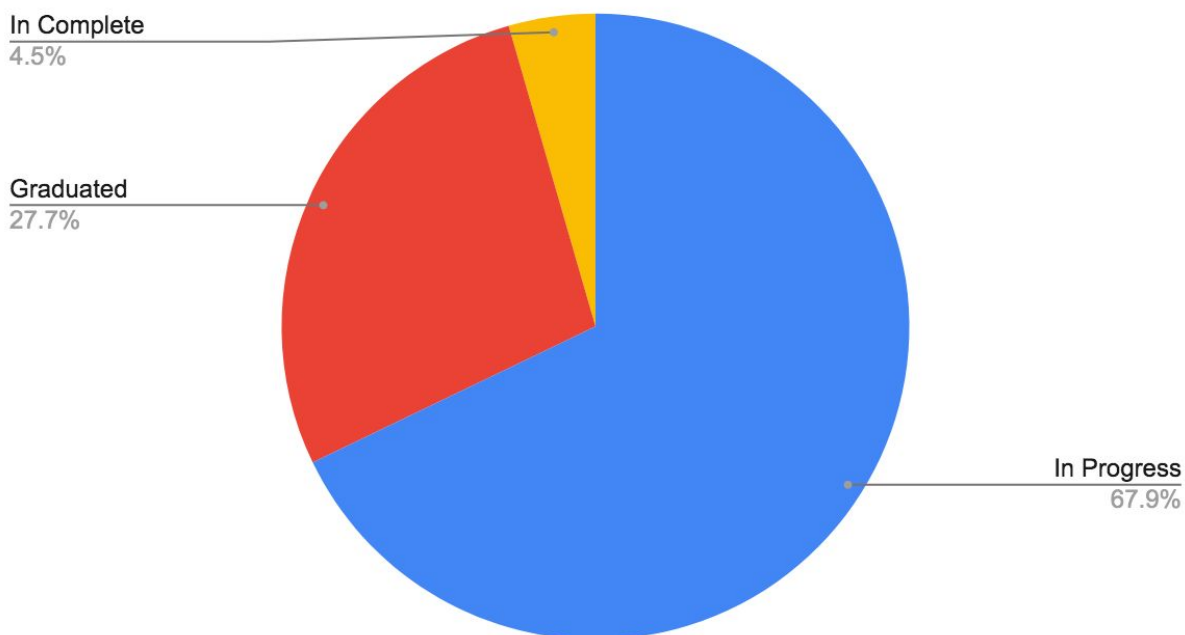
[Table 1.1: High Schools Attended by Caribbean Students]

High School Locations in Caribbean Region



[Figure 1.1: High School Locations in Caribbean Region]

College Status



[Figure 1.2: College Status]

2.0 College and Degree Breakdown

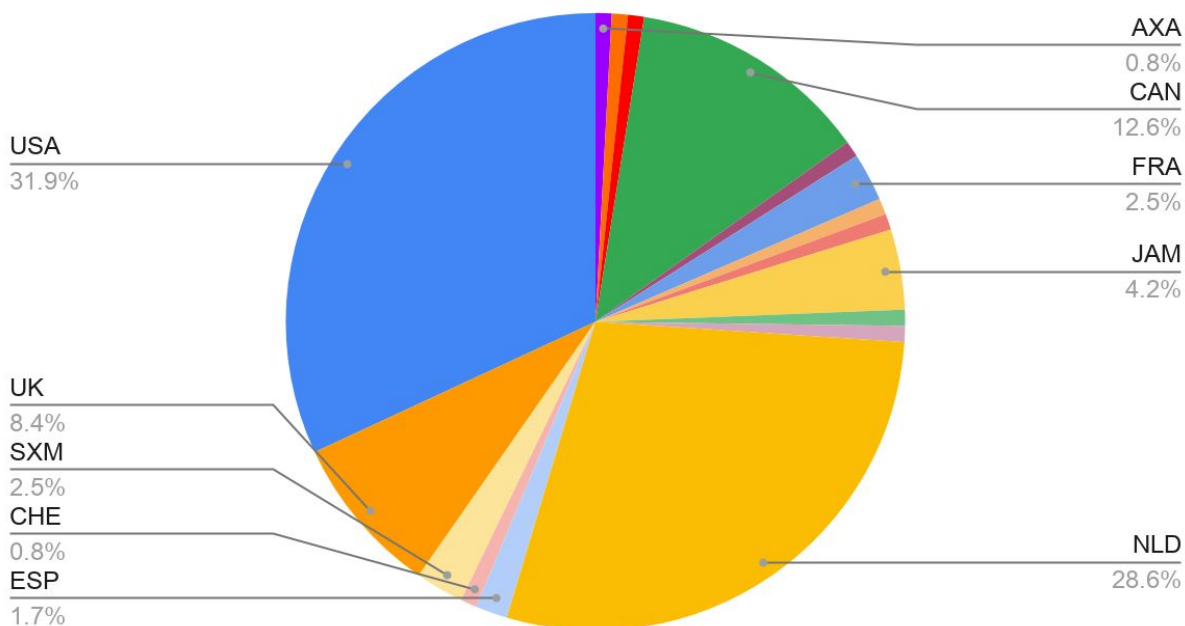
Colleges and Universities Attended	Number of Students
Aichi Prefectural University	1
Andrews University	1
Anglia Ruskin University	2
Avans University of Applied Sciences	1
Borough of Manhattan Community College	1
Breda University of Applied Sciences	1
Bury College	1
Cardenal Herrera University	1
Carleton University	1
College of Saint Scholastica	1
College of the Florida Keys	1
Concordia University	5
Cornell University	1
Dalhousie University	1
Dominica State College	1
Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts	1
Erasmus University	1
Fashion Institute of Technology	1
Flagler University	1
Florida International University	1
Fontys Hogeschool voor de Kunsten	2
George August Göttingen Universität	1
George Brown College	1
Giordanne Logan	1
Han University of Applied Science Nijmegen/Arnhem	1
Hanze University of Applied Sciences	1

Hogeschool Arnhem en Nijmegen	1
Hogeschool, Rotterdam	1
Hogeschool, Utrecht	3
Hogeschool van Amsterdam	1
Hotelschool, the Hague	5
Howard University	7
IE University	1
Imperial College London	1
inHolland	1
King's College London	1
Leiden University	1
Les Roches Global Hospitality Education	1
Maastricht University	1
Manchester Metropolitan University	1
MBO Rijnland	1
McGill University	2
Midwestern State University	1
Monroe College	1
Morehouse College	1
Mount Allison University	1
NHL Stenden University	1
Northeastern University	2
Nova Southeastern	1
Pennsylvania State University	3
Rijn IJssel College	2
ROC van Amsterdam	2
Rotterdam Business School	1
Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences	1
Saxion	1
Schulich School of Business - York U	1
Seneca College	1

Sorbonne Université	1
The American Business School of Paris	1
The Hague University of Applied Sciences	1
The University of Tampa	1
Tilburg University	2
Trinity College	1
Union College	1
Universidad de Montemorelos	1
Université des Antilles	1
Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès	1
University of Amsterdam	1
University of Aruba	1
University of Birmingham	2
University of Delaware	1
University of Glasgow	2
University of Miami	1
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor	4
University of Pennsylvania	2
University of South Florida	1
University of St. Martin	2
University of Surrey	1
University of the West Indies	5
University of Toronto	1
University of West Florida	1
Université du Québec à Montréal	1
UT Austin	1
Utrecht University	2
Western Michigan University	1

[Table 2.0: College and Universities Attended by Caribbean Students]

Caribbean Students Abroad



[Figure 2.0: Caribbean Students Abroad]

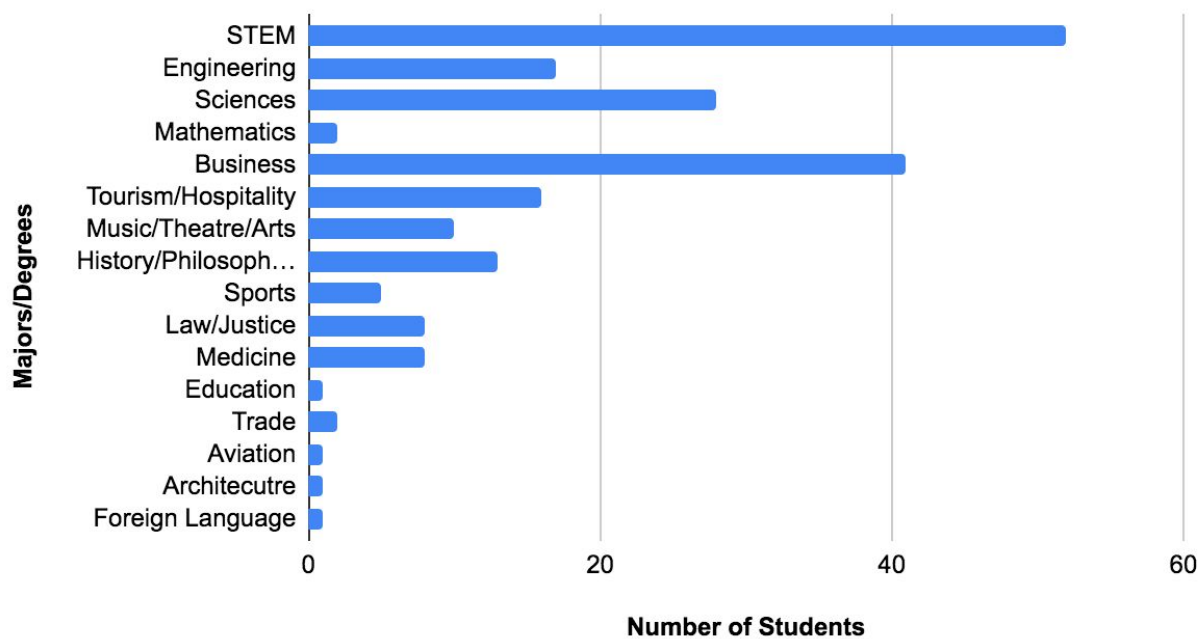
Majors/Degrees	Number of Students
Accounting	1
Aeronautical Science	1
Aerospace Engineering	1
Animal Behaviour	1
Applied Foreign Languages	1
Architecture	1
Aviation	2
Biochemistry	1
Biology	9
Biomedical Engineering	2
Biopsychology/Cognition/Neuroscience	3
Business/Economics/Management	17
Chemistry	2
Child Studies	1

Civil Engineering	2
Cognitive Science	1
Communications/Media	4
Computer Science	2
Cosmetology	1
Criminal Justice	2
Criminology	1
Culinary	1
Cultural Anthropology/Sociology/Psychology	3
Electrical Engineering	2
English/Literature	2
Environmental Sciences	1
European Law	1
Exercise/Sports Science/Athletic Training	3
Film	2
General Liberal Arts	3
Geography	1
Hospitality Business Management/Administration	9
Industrial Engineering	1
International Business Law	1
International Hotel Management	2
International Sports Management	1
Labour Law/Employment Relations	1
Law	3
Marine Biology	1
Marine Engineering/Seamanship	1
Marketing	4
Math/Stats	2
Mechanical Engineering	4
Mechatronics	1
Medicine	5

Molecular Ecosystem Sciences	1
Nuclear Engineering	1
Performing Arts	3
Philosophy	1
Physics	3
Physiotherapy	1
Political Science	1
Production Management	1
Registered Nurse	2
Social Work	1
Teacher	1
Tourism Management	2

[Table 2.1: Major/Degree Breakdown]

Major/Degree Breakdown for Caribbean Students



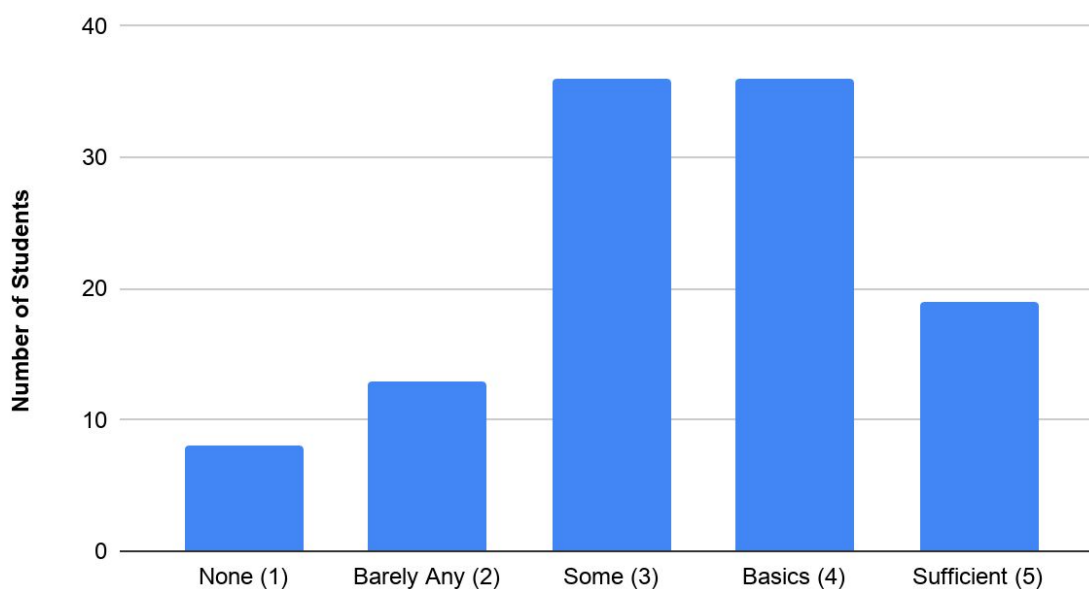
[Figure 2.1: Major/Degree Breakdown for Caribbean Students]

3.0 College Preparation Data

Tools that Prepared Caribbean Students for College	Number of Students
AP/CAPE/IB Courses	14
Being Independent from Parents	5
Career Counselor	1
College Counselor	6
College Visits	2
Gap Year	4
Hefty Course Load Senior Year (Similar to College)	12
High School Academic System	11
High School Design Project/Independent Studies	3
Hurricane Irma	1
Knowing Career Choice	2
Life Skills	3
Mentors (Current College Student/Graduates)	8
Moved to US in High School	1
Myself/Life Experience	12
Nothing	7
Online MOOCS/EdX/Khan Academy	1
Organization	4
Parents/Family	8
Research/Youtube	11
Struggling Freshman Year	9
Study Abroad	2
Summer Bridge	1
Teachers that Taught Higher Education	4
Work Ethic	4
Working	5
Workshops on College	1

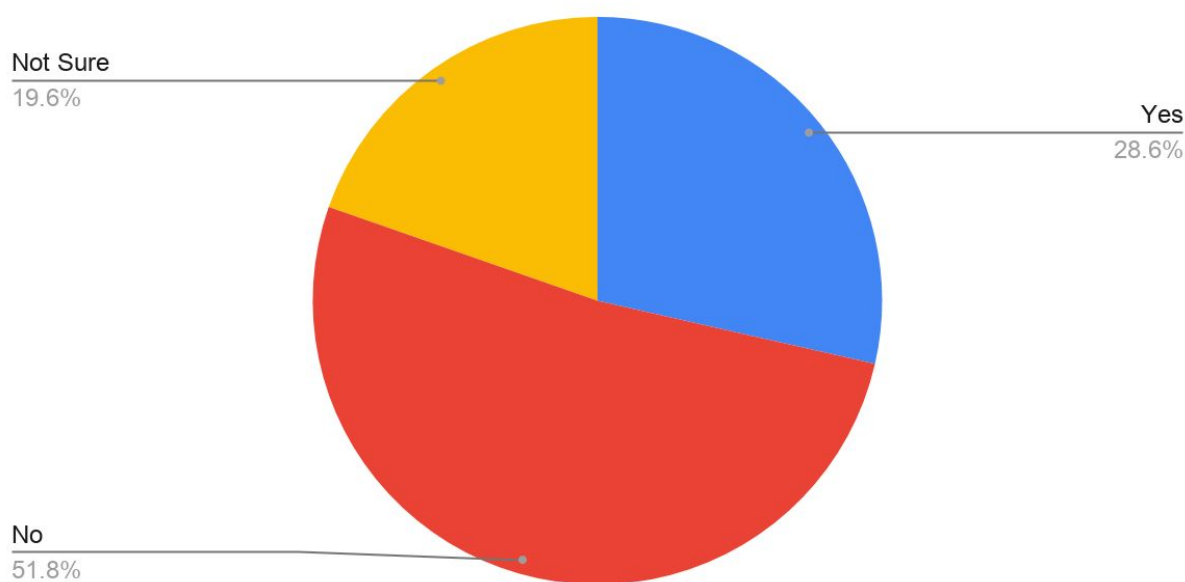
[Table 3.0: Tools that Prepared Caribbean Students for College]

Level of College Preparation Received in Highschool



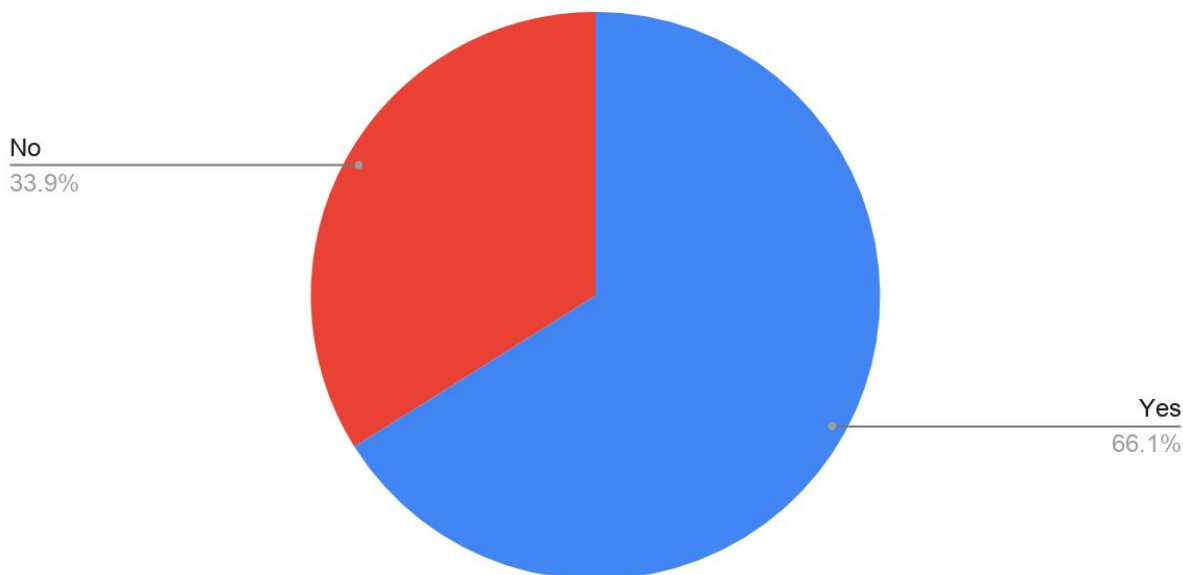
[Figure 3.0: Level of College Preparation Received in High School]

Student Response: Did Your High School Provide Sufficient/Quality College Counseling?



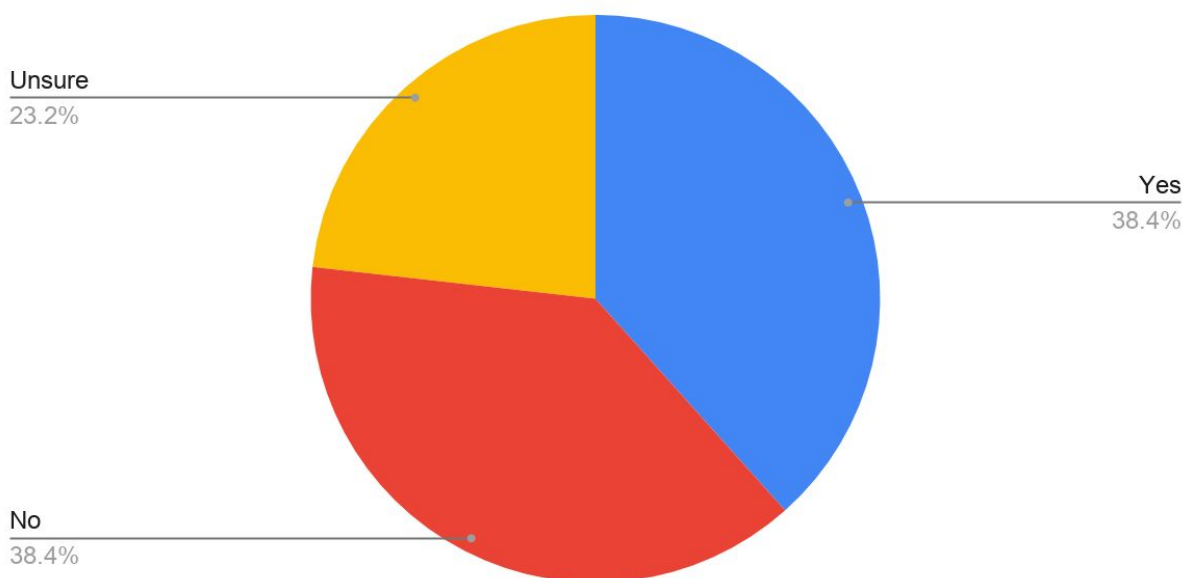
[Figure 3.1: Quality of College Counseling for Caribbean Students]

Student Response: Did You Feel Certain in the Career You Chose Prior to College?



[Figure 3.2: Career Assurance]

Student Response: Does Your Country of Residence Provide Ample Financial Aid?



[Figure 3.3: Financial Aid Received by Caribbean Students]

What Caribbean Students Wished They Knew Before College	Number of Students
AP Conversions/College Credits	2
Be Vulnerable/Be Yourself	2
Better Dutch	1
College Is Not for Everyone	1
Cost of College	2
Different Academic Styles (UK vs. US vs. Canada vs. NL)	7
Financial Aid	5
Resources to Find Housing	2
How to Apply for College	1
How to Live Alone/Life Skills	4
Importance of Work Experience/Internships	3
Life in US/Life in NL	2
Managing Job while Being a FT* Student	1
Math	7
Mental Health/Work-Life Balance	3
Moving Abroad/Culture Shock	11
Networking	2
Personal Finance	18
How to Pick the Right University	1
Retaining High School Information	1
Right Mindset to Transition to College	5
Scientific Research	1
Setting Up Life Abroad (Registration, Insurance, What to Bring etc)	7
Some High School Topics Overlap with College/ Bring Old Notes/Textbooks	1
How to Start a Side-hustle for Money	1
Time Management/Organization/Discipline	19

Tutoring	1
Understanding Degree Program and Career Options	7
Value of Faith	1
Working in the US	2

[Table 3.1: What Caribbean Students Wished They Knew Before College]

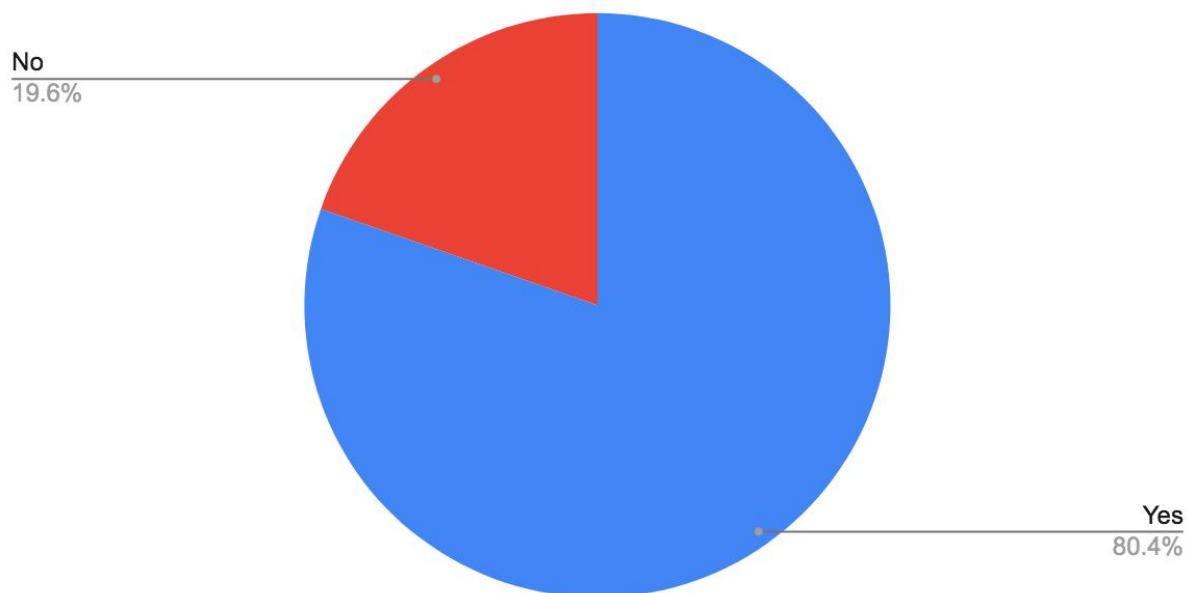
Caribbean Student Collegiate Obstacles	Number of Students
Attending Class	1
Being Independent/Life Skills	1
Culture Shock/Moving to a New City/Fitting In	27
Distance from Home	2
Everything	1
Financial Aid	3
Finding an Internship	1
Knowledge Gaps from High School	1
Lack of Administrative Help	2
Language	2
Learning Style Changes	2
Living with Others	3
Managing School when Sick	1
Math	5
Personal Finance	8
Procrastination/Time Management	22
Racism	1
Self Criticism	2
Translating Degree into a Career	1
Weather	5
Workload/Struggling with Material	16
Work/Life Balance + Mental Health	15
Writing	3

[Table 3.2: Caribbean Student Collegiate Obstacles]

College Preparatory Resources Desired by Caribbean Students	Number of Students
Accurate College Information about Different Schools	10
Better/More Honest High School Teachers	2
Career Fairs	21
College App (Networking, Tips for Success, Food Places, etc)	5
College App Editors	6
College Counselor	14
College Visits/Fairs (including Recent Caribbean Alum)	21
Guidance for Picking Career	1
Housing Aid	1
Language Preparation	1
Mentors/Networking	17
Personal Finance	1
SAT Prep	2
Scholarships/Financial Aid + Process	32
Time	1
Visiting Country Prior to Leaving	1
Workshops for International Students (College transition/Internships)	8
Writing Workshops	1

[Table 3.3: College Preparatory Resources Desired by Caribbean Students]

Desire for Greater Career and Collegiate Exposure Prior to College



[Figure 3.4: Interest in Career Exposure]

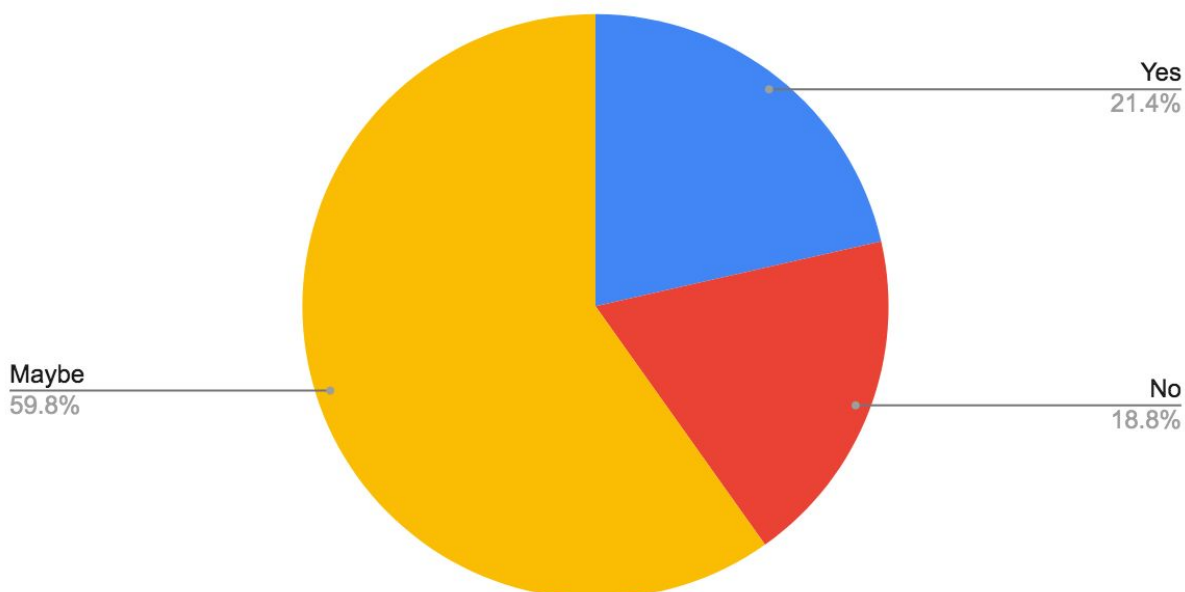
Biggest Issues in Education in Home Country	Number of Students
Accommodating Education System for Immigrants	1
Arts Are Not Valued	3
Career Rankings (Priority List)/Attitudes Towards Different Careers	5
Lack of College Preparation at Younger Age	2
Cost of Tuition	2
Department of Education's Handling of Education System	12
Distractions	1
Easy of Academia/Mindset	14
Education is Out of Date	8
Explaining the Importance of Education	2
Financial Misuse/Government Corruption	4
Global Accreditation	1

Inadequate Funding for Students and Teachers	16
Lack Support for Entrepreneurship	1
Inequality Across Schools/Standardized Education System	5
Lack of Accurate College Preparation Information	3
Lack of Committed/Qualified Teachers	14
Lack of Discipline/Accountability within Education	6
Lack of Exposure/Opportunity	24
Lack of Higher Education Institutions	4
Lack of Jobs/Being "Overqualified"	4
Lack of School Programs for Students	3
Lack of Student Recognition Locally or Regionally	4
Limited Courses	2
Limited Educational Tools and Resources	14
Mental and Emotional Resources for Students	1
Mindset of Caribbean People	5
Lack of Representation on the International Stage	1
Little to No Technical Trades or Vocational Training	3
Politicians are Unqualified with No Global Experience	1
Practicing	1
Pressure to Go to College and to Pick a Career Fast	1
School Curriculum Is Not Good for Different Learning Styles (E.g. Learning Disabilities)	5
Limited Resources for Standardized Testing	2
Lack Study Abroad Opportunities	1
Lack of Interpersonal/Life Skills Training	3
Too Much Competition Around Pride and Prestige	1

[Table 3.4: Issues in Education in the Region]

4.0 Caribbean Brain Drain

Student Response: Do You Plan on Returning to Your Home Country Post-Graduation?



[Figure 4.0: Caribbean Brain Drain]

Reasons for Returning to the Region	Number of Students
Always Planned To	1
Job Availability	5
Contract Mandated	1
Parents/Family	8
Home is Home	10
My Country Needs Me	14
Opportunities for Entrepreneurship	7
Vacation	1

[Table 4.0: Reasons for Returning to the Region]

Reasons for Not Returning to the Region	Number of Students
Lack of Available Jobs	51
Experiencing the World	11
Caribbean Mentality	1

Disability Constraints	1
Unsure about Career Path	3
Local Issues (Unstable Government)	5
To Build Experience	1
Lack of Infrastructure	5
Does Not Want to be Stuck	1
Accepted Job Offer Outside the Region	2
At Some Point, I Will Return to Give Back	4
Higher Education	5
Want to Live Abroad for a While	1

[Table 4.1: Reasons for Not Returning to the Region]

5.0 Caribbean Student Remarks: Tips for Success in College

1. Finding a mentor that helps with anything to do with living in the chosen country and the school system
2. Understand the value of good mental health, erase the stigma that is so deeply rooted in our culture, and seek help when it is needed --- whether mental, academic or physical
3. Being told, "Once you get in the real world you'll understand things are different", all my life never truly hit me until moving. I wish I had listened more to the realness of this saying. Going from the islands to the world is certainly a shock regardless of being exposed beforehand or not.
4. This may be cliché but failing doesn't mean it's over. Keep trying.
5. College is not for everyone. It's okay if you don't go, and it's okay if you take longer than others. It's not a race. Take your time and really learn what you want.
6. Draft a financial plan.
7. Educate yourself. Do a lot of research on the college/institution you are looking into, and consider all of its aspects. This is especially true if you play a sport and are being recruited by college coaches.
8. Do a ton of research before you sign any documents regarding your education!
9. Don't do it alone. Don't be afraid to ask for help

10. Don't be afraid to leave home. It gets better over time and you learn things about yourself that you never even knew.
11. Don't procrastinate.
12. Go study abroad, you will most likely be on your own in college, so it can be a good exercise.
13. Find more support for students trying to further their education. Find someone to do your applications with.
14. For the students who are going to the Netherlands and applying for Duo, learn how to budget.
15. Having others in the field of your interest to explain their day to day experience and life in the field.
16. Honestly, do as much research as you can. For both your field of study and the place you're going to study it.
17. I am very passionate about cross-cultural experience. There are numerous experiences that usually come unexpectedly when facing the unknown, and more Caribbean students should reach out to try to discover more of themselves.
18. I believe that studying at home first provided me with the tools on what to expect and how to prepare for exams in college.
19. I would hope that students take foreign language classes more seriously because it opens up new doors and bigger avenues for which we can succeed.
20. College is not only where you go to study, but it is a place to discover who you are.
21. Changing a major may be the best thing for you, but you must always remember never to run away from a challenge. Challenges now can create opportunities for the future.
22. I think that students should know that although free-moving is harder, it IS an option, and they don't have to wait on the government to follow their dreams.
23. I wish I knew about Co-Op programs and the value of research experience, particularly in a competitive environment like Toronto. This would have allowed me to not only gain practical research skills, but also be exposed to and learn directly from professionals in my field. In addition, this would have aided me immensely in terms of job searching.

24. I would say always try to add on your education. In my case, a two year degree was not enough, and now I am studying at a Marine Mechanics Institute to get a better experience before I go into the working world.
25. If you can do community college or CAPE back home, do it! Those credits will save you a lot of money and time.
26. If you're at Howard you're in great hands with the Caribbean and international population and upperclassmen.
27. It is all about trial and error. Learn from your mistakes.
28. It's not easy, especially first year. Changing majors is super common, but if you have your goal in mind, push through. The end will come quickly, and it will feel like time has flown.
29. It's a lot of fun. You can easily get distracted, so you need to stay focused and manage your time
30. Make sure to check your school's scholarship list to see potential scholarships you can apply for.
31. Make sure to do thorough research on what you're choosing to do, where you're choosing to live, what the outcome could be, good and bad, in the long run, and find something that brings you comfort away from home to help with homesickness.
32. Take more classes on managing finances.
33. Networking, internship, start to build your experience while you are studying.
34. Get involved as a volunteer.
35. Make sure that you have these life skills (cooking, budgeting, cleaning) but also be sure of what you want to study instead of thinking you have to have everything figured out before you finish high school. It is okay to take time off after graduating from high school if you find that you are not fully prepared. I also had to take a year off in order to be able to afford to go to college. The study grant that you get from the government may cover costs for tuition but there are a lot of other expenses that need to be taken into consideration especially when moving to the Netherlands.
36. Read the school website and personally email/contact the professors or staff involved in your area of interest. Absolutely no one will tell you about the resources, especially as a foreigner. Find them, by any means, and exhaust them.

37. Set your life up from freshman year of college. If you're starting a business or looking at a dream company, that needs to be cultivated early.
38. Setting a limit for the amount of responsibility that you take up will reduce the chances of you being mentally fatigued, if circumstances arise where things don't go as planned
39. Sometimes it gets tough, and you feel unsure about a lot of things, but pushing through it; it will make you so proud of yourself.
40. Sometimes you'll feel like leaving, but stay the course! Things will work out. Don't forget to take care of yourself both physically and mentally.
41. Students should be aware of and mentally prepared to face the challenges that accompany any college experience (i.e., meeting people from various walks of life (different cultures, religious backgrounds, political affiliations, etc.), acclimating to different temperatures and coping with seasonal changes, managing finances, managing time, making calculated decisions that positively affect your personal and professional life, seeking mentorship, getting involved on campus).
42. Students, more so Caribbean students, need to focus more on gaining work experience through internships and fellowships in and outside of their university. Too often students focus solely on academic performance without regard for actual real world work. Based on my experience, external internship opportunities provide gateways and opportunities beyond what is being offered on campus.
43. Caribbean students should seek immediate advice whenever enrolling in college, and attempt to build their professional profiles publicly, as much as we can.
44. Learn about the culture differences. You have to learn to adjust while still keeping your identity.
45. Go in confident with the hunger to learn and be open to that new experience and new environment.
46. There are a lot of hidden degrees in English all around Europe.
47. These are the best years of your life.
48. Time management is a skill that must be introduced to students prior to their first semester. Seek out resources at your college like health services, student centers, mentorships, associations, etc.

49. Wait until you know what you want to study. You can always try something out that you're not very sure of but never do something just to do it. Always have a reason for why you're doing it/anything.
50. Learn about taxes and how to handle & organize your bills.

Discussion

As the world pushes further and further into the technological age, it is more important now than ever that the Caribbean has a highly qualified labor force to enhance economic growth. To achieve this, data collection and educational reform will be two of the key mechanisms to not only increase the Caribbean's level of digital literacy, but aid in the diversification of our regional economy.

Currently, the Caribbean region has enforced educational coverage for primary and secondary education, but does not provide coverage for early childhood education as well as tertiary education. Early childhood education is an essential part of a child's foundational education prior to primary schools, but because it is not enforced, it results in a variance in the level of education received for children based on their family's income bracket. This results in low-income or rural area families missing out on early childhood education¹. In addition the lack of push for tertiary education, leaves students with less highly-valuable skills to improve productivity and competitiveness in the Caribbean region. According to an article published by the World Bank in 2013 on the quality of education in the region, fewer than 15% of students in the region go on to further their education.

As part of our research, it was determined that one of the biggest issues in education as reported by students was acquiring and retaining qualified and committed teachers, which has proven itself to be a chronic challenge for the region, especially for subjects like English, Math, and Science. Because of this, the level of success of students in these subjects is severely lacking, with less than 50% of students passing the regional Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) exams in English and Math in 2009¹. Applying for tertiary education abroad is increasingly becoming more and more competitive as students must fight against the best and brightest from more developed countries for a spot at the top institutions around the world. Ignoring for now the financial constraints for Caribbean students, gaining subpar education due to the lack of technological and academic resources, career exposure, study abroad opportunities, and qualified teachers makes it difficult for students to succeed abroad as they are being taught outdated and inaccurate information with a limited scope of the real world that puts them at a disadvantage compared to other international students².

A large majority of young students that fail to qualify for tertiary education or simply do not have the financial means to afford education abroad are left in unemployment because they were not taught the necessary skills to be productive in the workplace. Technology is reshaping the labor market in the region, and students that fail to demonstrate digital literacy will find themselves in a tough stop trying to attain work in a digital workplace. Currently, the unemployment rate of young Caribbean students (ages 15 - 19) that fail to attain tertiary education is 2x the adult average, and solving the systemic issues of the education system is vital to actuate economic opportunities to push the region forward¹.

In addition, the lack of funding towards education in the region, makes it difficult for teachers to stay relevant due to the lack of resources, but also puts huge financial constraints on students and their families. As part of our research, 38.4% of students felt that their country of residence did not provide ample financial aid and another 23.8% were not knowledgeable about the financial resources potentially available to them. Foreign countries often provide little to no additional financial aid or scholarship opportunities for Caribbean students. With the little financial aid available in the region, this makes paying for college a huge responsibility for families. With the lack of higher education institutions within the region, students are forced to put themselves in extensive debt to gain higher education. This makes college simply unfeasible for students in low-income families. These are the students that are made the most vulnerable as the world becomes more digital.

In order to tackle these issues, it is important that the region emphasize data collection to determine how extensive these issues are, and to properly inform policy makers on the status of the region's education system. Education is one key factor in achieving economic growth. In fact, national test scores even have a bearing on gross domestic product (GDP), with a 'single standard deviation difference in test scores between countries' equating to around 2 percentage points in annual long-term GDP growth¹.

For students that successfully are able to complete tertiary education, 59.8% remain unsure as to whether or not they will return to the region. The major determining factor in this is whether or not these students can find a job opportunity that pays them what they deserve for their level of expertise. Currently, the region is experiencing extensive brain drain due to the lack of infrastructure and financial support for entrepreneurs. One of the most common comments that undervalues students is to say that they are "overqualified" for a position and simply cannot be paid their worth. This results in our experts working for other developed and developing countries, adding to those countries economic growth, and leaving the Caribbean region in a more vulnerable position.

With global warming and climate change becoming more and more realized, the appearance of super-hurricanes like Hurricane Irma, Maria, and Dorian will continue to plague the Caribbean region, putting the region in a fragile position. The region needs local experts to work on tackling

some of these issues. The region needs to collaborate on data collection of every sector, especially education, to reform our economic growth, sustainability, and regional longevity strategy. The region needs to take advantage of digital technology to enhance and optimize each sector and invest in education, infrastructure and entrepreneurship to reduce brain drain. Not only will such a collaborative effort aid in the economic growth of the region, but will allow the region to have conversations in regards to global events and their impact on the sustainability and longevity of Caribbean islands with data collected and analyzed by local experts.

Conclusion

Based on our research, it is clear that there needs to be conversations held within the region in regards educational reform to help students on their journey to attain high education and support them once they have. Failure to do this will cost the region the majority of its highly-skilled labor force year after year. With the lack of experts and data, it will be difficult for the region to continue to grow in the face of global events and climate change that impact the Caribbean region far greater than other countries. We at EmpowerU hope that this report displays a clear need for more data collection and sparks a conversation on improving the educational support for students, so the region can continue to thrive.

References

1. “How to Improve the Quality of Education in the Caribbean for the Next Generation?” *World Bank*, 20 Sept. 2013, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/09/18/caribbean-quality-education-improvements-next-generation>.
2. Gaible, Edmond. 2008. Survey of ICT and Education in the Caribbean: A summary report, Based on 16 Country Surveys. Washington, DC: infoDev / World Bank. Available at <http://www.infodev.org/en/Publication.441.html>
3. “Map of Caribbean.” *Geology.com*, geology.com/world/cia/map-of-caribbean.gif.

Appendix

[EmpowerU Caribbean Students Abroad Survey](#)

[Country Code Name Table](#)

Figure 6.0: Map of Caribbean Region³



Table 6.0: (Data for Figure 1.0: Gender Breakdown)

Gender Breakdown	Number of Students
Female	71
Male	41

Table 6.1: (Data for Figure 1.1: High School Locations in Caribbean Region)

High School Location	Number of Students
Anguilla	4
Aruba	1
Bahamas	1
Curacao	2
Dominica	2
Guadeloupe	2
Jamaica	4
Saint Kitts + Nevis	2

Sint Maarten	69
Trinidad & Tobago	15
USA	3
USVI	1

Table 6.2: (Data for Figure 1.2: College Status)

Were You Able to Complete Your Degree?	Number of Students
In-Progress	75
Graduated	31
In-Complete	5

Table 6.3: (Data for Figure 2.0: Caribbean Students Abroad)

College Location	Number of Students
Anguilla	1
Aruba	1
Barbados	1
Canada	15
Dominica	1
France	3
Germany	1
Guadeloupe	1
Jamaica	5
Japan	1
Mexico	1
NL	33
Spain	2
Switzerland	1
SXM	3
UK	10
USA	38

Table 6.4: (Data for Figure 2.1: Major/Degree Breakdown for Caribbean Students)

Major Breakdown	Number of Students
STEM (All)	47
Engineering	13
Sciences	30
Mathematics	1
Business	6
Tourism/Hospitality	4
Music/Theatre/Arts	5
History/Philosophy/Psychology/Politics	27
Sports	9
Law/Justice	10
Medicine	28
Education	1
Trade	2
Aviation	1
Architecture	1
Foreign Language	1

Table 6.5: (Data for Figure 3.0: Level of College Preparation Received in High School)

Did You Feel Adequately Prepared for College After High School?	Number of Students
Not at all (1)	8
Ehhh (2)	13
Kind of (3)	35
A little (4)	36
Yes (5)	19

Table 6.6: (Data for Figure 3.1: Quality of College Counseling for Caribbean Students)

Did Your High School Provide Sufficient/Quality College Counseling?	Number of Students
Yes	32
No	58
Not Sure	21

Table 6.7: (Data for Figure 3.2: Career Assurance)

Did You Feel Certain in the Career You Chose Prior to College?	Number of Students
Yes	73
No	38

Table 6.8: (Data for Figure 3.3: Financial Aid Received by Caribbean Students)

Does Your Country of Origin/Residence Provide Ample Financial Aid?	Number of Students
Yes	43
No	42
Unsure	26

Table 6.9: (Data for Figure 3.4: Interest in Career Exposure)

Do You Wish You Had Greater Career Exposure Prior to Selecting a Degree Program?	Number of Students
Yes	89
No	22

Table 7.0: (Data for Figure 4.0: Caribbean Brain Drain)

Do You Plan on Returning to Your Home Country Post-Graduation?	Number of Students
Yes	24
No	21
Maybe	66

Additional Data

Table 7.1: Individual Financial Aid

Did Student Receive Sufficient Financial Aid to Offset Costs for College?	Number of Students
Yes	62
No	49

Table 7.2: Degree Change

Degree Change (Did Student Switch Majors?)	Number of Students
Yes	26
No	85

Table 7.3: Reason for Degree Change

Reason for Degree Change	Number of Students
Did Not Know Enough About Degree to Career Translation	5
Not Enough Career Exposure	10
Was Not Sure to Begin With	2
Too Hard/Did Not Fit	10
Administration Issues	3

Table 7.4: Reason for In-Complete College Education

Reasons for In-Complete College Education	Number of Students
Gap Year	1
Find Passion	1
Cost	1
Was Not for Me	1
Failed	1
Too Young	1

Additional Resources

1. [World Bank: A Caribbean Education Strategy](#)
2. [UNESCO: Education and Development in the English-Speaking Caribbean](#)
3. [UNESCO: Regional Overview: Latin America and Caribbean](#)
4. [EmpowerU Caribbean High School Students Survey](#)
5. [EmpowerU Website](#)