

**ROY REID**  
**THE JAMAICAN ASSOCIATION ON INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (JAID)**  
**MAY 10, 2010.**

**INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**  
**INCEPTION REPORT**

**1. Jamaica: General Information**

**Area:** 10,991 sq km

**Population:** 2,607, 600

- Rural- 1, 252, 700
- Urban 1, 354, 900

**Life Expectancy Rate:**

Total population: 74.13 years

male: 71.26 years

female: 77.07 years

**Infant Mortality Rate:**

Total: 15.98 deaths/1,000 live births

male: 16.66 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 15.27 deaths/1,000 live births

**Maternal Mortality Rate:**

**Literacy Rate:**

Total population: 87.9%

male: 84.1%

female: 91.6%

**Education**

The Jamaican educational system consists of four levels.

1. The Early Childhood Level- this level caters to students ages three to six.

2. The Primary Level- this level caters to students ages six to twelve [grades 1 to 6].

Primary schools are public schools and government controlled. The government provides free compulsory education for children between the ages of six to twelve.

Government-sponsored scholarships for public secondary schools are awarded based on students' success in an examination taken at age eleven.

3. The Secondary Level- this level caters to students ages twelve to sixteen [there is a second cycle that caters for students' ages sixteen to eighteen]. The secondary level is accessible through private and public schools. Students sit examination at the end of grade eleven.

4. The Tertiary Level- this level caters to students ages eighteen and onwards. Tertiary education is available through colleges and a number of national and off shore universities.

There are also segregated primary and secondary schools for children with intellectual, physical hearing and visual disabilities.

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**Laws Concerned with Person with Intellectual Disabilities (PWID)**

There is a National Policy for persons with Disabilities developed by Government and the disability Sector aimed at achieving equality of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The first draft was tabled in Parliament.

**Financial Assistance for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PWID)**

There is no formal programme for persons with intellectual disabilities; however, cash assistance can be obtained through a national programme known as the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATHE). PATHE was designed for a number of target groups including persons with disabilities. Assistance received is dependent on specific criteria relating eligibility to school attendance and health care.

**2. Outline of the Jamaican Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

i. The Jamaican Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID) was founded by Randolph Lopez, a parent of a child with Down syndrome. Since 1956 the Association has been providing leadership in the field of Mental Retardation and is today the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization of professionals and volunteers concerned about Mental Retardation and other Developmental Disabilities. It is a non-governmental agency that enjoys a partnership with the Government on some of its programmes. It is a national body with branches across the island and enjoys a solid track record in its field of operation.

**Vision**

To provide dynamic leadership, advocacy and influence the full integration and inclusion of persons with Mental Retardation and other Developmental Disabilities in the society.

**Mission:**

The Jamaican Association on Mental Retardation works through education, advocacy and research to improve the quality of life for children and adults with Mental Retardation and their families and work to prevent the causes and the effects of Mental Retardation.

ii. JAID is a multi-service agency which provides services to a target population of over seventy thousand persons with intellectual disabilities in Jamaica. JAID accomplishes its goals through a number of programmes:

**Early Intervention Programme**

This programme provides stimulation for children with intellectual and other developmental disabilities from birth to six years of age. It prepares them for appropriate school placement.

**Schools of Special Education**

JAID and the ministry of education jointly operate the Schools of Special Education in Jamaica. There is an island wide network of 27 Schools of Special Education, 5 of which are main schools and the rest satellite schools. The total student population is 1,800 with 140 trained teachers and 150 non teaching staff.

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While the association has an impressive menu of intervention programs aimed at achieving the goals of the organization, it is the area of special education that has seen the greatest level of sustained success. The collaboration between the ministry of education and youth and the JAMR shows strong commitment to this program.

#### **Resource Programme**

This programme provides intensive individualized remedial instruction in language arts and mathematics for at-risk primary and secondary school students in neighbouring communities. It is currently available in:

- Greater Portmore Learning Centre in St. Catherine
- Llandilo School of Special Education in Savanna-La-Mar, Westmoreland

Teachers target areas of weakness, enhance strengths, and build independence in specific learning strategies and study skills.

#### **Parents and Professionals in Partnership (PPROP)**

A strong parent support group known as parents and professionals in partnership (PPROP) which seeks to promote greater interaction and provide training opportunities aimed at empowering parents to efficiently deal with the challenges of parenting a child with special needs.

#### **Adult Continuing Education**

A vocational training programme for adults with severe Intellectual Disabilities.

iii. The target group served by the JAMR include children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Jamaica. The number of beneficiaries are over seventy thousand across the island.

iv. My position as Principal is compromised of the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Manage the operation of the three schools in the cluster.
2. Manage the programmes of the schools.
3. Provide supervision for all staff members of the schools
4. Direct advocacy and public awareness activities about special education and intellectual disabilities.
5. Access resources to enhance the facilities and programmes of the schools
6. Plan and set goals for the schools.
7. Plan events to enhance parents and teachers awareness of disabilities.
8. Design, implement and coordinate programmes for the development of PWIDs.
9. Design, implement and coordinate programmes for the development of the school facilities.

### **3. Community Based Programme for Persons with Intellectual Disability:**

#### **1. Outline of the Project**

##### **a. Project Goals and Objectives**

The goals of this project is to create opportunities for employment and training for PWIDs and members of their household whose employability is indirectly or directly affect by the condition of the PWID.

In many instance households with person with intellectual disabilities must have a family member who is dedicated to provide care for the PWID and so the employability of that caregiver is curtailed by either shortened hours per day or in some cases no employment at all. Community based micro business enterprise can promote sustainable development for the Persons with Intellectual Disability, their adult household members and their community through the opportunities for on the job training and flexible employment: These enterprises would ensure access to integrated, gender-sensitive and rights-based vocational opportunities. Leadership skills would also be developed as embers of the targeted would be provided with business supervision and management training through local agencies such as HEART-NTA and Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce.

The specific objectives of the project are three-fold:

- To improve the vocational skills and employability of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and reduce reliance on community welfare by Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.
- The provide opportunities of employment for Person with Intellectual Disability and adult members of households which they belong.
- To provide opportunities of economic in dependence of leadership skills among Person with Intellectual Disability and their families.

#### **b. The Concept**

Three separate Micro Business Enterprises will be set up as subsidences of one company. There will be a common brand for all products produced however each enterprise will have its own management supervision and accounting system in place. The enterprises will include: Food Preparation and Serving, (packed products and drinks), Handicraft production (including basketry and wood craft) and ornamental in plant nursery.

Intended beneficiaries are males and females [PWIDs] aged 14-18 years (training); male and female [PWIDs] age 18 years and older (employment).

#### **c. Expected Outputs**

The project seeks to address the needs of PWIDs to gain employment after graduation.

- Products to supply the tourism industry in service to the local community and visitors who traverse the corridor between tourism centers in the parish.
- Well trained Persons with Intellectual Disability
- Development of leadership skills and advocacy skills-Person with Intellectual Disability.
- Employment for adult members of households with Person with Intellectual Disability

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**c. Inputs of Implementing Organizations**

- The Llandilo School of Special Education will provide the space for the enterprises to be established.
- The P.T.A will network with the Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce to have potential entity managers and supervisors gain first-hand experience.
- The HEART Trust NTA has on going certification of student and parents who are trained the different skill areas.
- The Llandilo School of Special Education management and leadership have a network relationship with the Hotel sector in the parish of Westmoreland and Hanover to ensure the products and services will be promoted among tourists.
- The JAID will provide technical and legal guidance.

**d. Budget and Period**

The project is in its embryonic stage as training of students and parent in the different skill areas is on going. Certification by HEART Trust/ NTA is ongoing. Trainers are already in place. Additional equipment will be needed namely: Commercial ovens, completion of the plant nursery and the building of a gazebo at the front of the property to serve as a sales outlet.

Full scale operation including registration of the company is expected to begin January 2011.

The estimated total budget for commencement is \$800,000.00. Funding will be secured through the Economic Empowerment Programme offered by the JCPD. It will be approached as a group project so that multiples of the \$100,000.00 grant ceiling will be obtained.

**2. Activities and Consequences**

1. A study was done to examine the feasibility of the project. Because of the excellent location (on the main through fare connecting Negril to the south coast of Jamaica) tourist and craft vendors have easy access to whatever we produce.

2. The project has been introduced to the P.T.A and the parents have pledged their support for it and are eager to see its implementation.

The major strength of the project so far is the willingness of the HEART-NTA to accommodate the project and the eagerness of the parents for the vocational classes to begin.

The process of monitoring the activities of each group will be holding of regular meetings and workshops.

**4. Intellectual Disability in Jamaica**

Persons with intellectual disabilities represent the largest disability group in Jamaica. Many of the services are not offered to persons with ID exclusively. The following table highlights the services provided by both Government and NGOs.

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**Table 1 Services to PWID**

<b>Government</b>	<b>NGOs</b>
Early detection and diagnosis	Early detection and diagnosis and intervention
Education support (remuneration of staff, subvention for recurrent expenditure)	Special Education Intervention
Monitoring and evaluation of special education programmes	Family Support services (care and support)
Provision of information and advice	Public Education
Introduction of policy for persons with disabilities	Advocacy
Introduction of legislation to facilitate access	Vocational Skills Training
	Employment Opportunities
	Social and Recreational Programmes

**13. The Roles of Non-governmental Organizations/Government/Residents**

Special education in Jamaica was pioneered by NGOs that have over the years, been responding to needs of persons or groups in individual communities. Their efforts were sustained through their own fundraising activities, but as their services expanded assistance was sought from government and international agencies. In 1974, a formal relationship was established with the Government with regards to the education of children with disabilities.

With the provision of education the role of Government expanded to include the commitment to support for staff remuneration and recurrent expenditure. They facilitated the establishment of several agencies eg. The Jamaica Social Investment Fund and the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica to which NGOs have been applying for assistance through grant funding. They have also instituted additional support services carried out through The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities in the areas of transportation, grants for small business initiatives and training through sheltered workshop.

The role of residents and the wider community is highlighted in the provision of support services and general integration.

**5. Situational Analysis of Persons with Intellectual Disability in Jamaica**

**1. Diagnosis of Intellectual Disability/Early intervention**

Very limited services exist in the area of early detection of Intellectual Disability. Early detection is primarily done by parents armed with knowledge of developmental milestones and awareness of individual doctors. Currently there are two agencies involved in the early identification of children with disabilities generally. These agencies however, do not offer early intervention programmes.

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There are approximately six agencies that offer inclusive early intervention programmes across the island. They are:

- The Early Stimulation Programme
- McCam Child Development Centre
- Rural Services for Children with Disabilities
- Clarendon Group for the Disabled
- 3D Projects

The Early Stimulation Programme is operated by the Government and the other agencies by NGOs. These programmes are centre as well as home based.

Although the team approached to diagnosis is recommended and introduced in at least one agency, because of personnel constraints, it is a limited team that is utilized. There are a number of private agencies that offer diagnostic service; however, the cost is often times prohibitive.

- a. Persons with Intellectual Disability represent 3-4% of the population.
- b. Persons involved in diagnosing children with intellectual disability include the Doctor; Clinical Psychologist; Therapist (Occupational, Speech, Physical), Social Worker and the Nurse.
- c. Due to the limited number of school placements, after diagnosis a child will be placed based on the availability of space or be enlisted on the long waiting lists of many schools.

## **2. Education**

**a. Approximately 2.3%** of children with Intellectual Disability attend schools in Jamaica.

b. Children are placed within special education programmes across the island. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the children attending schools Island wide are enrolled in the Schools of Special Education operated by the JAMR in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The remaining thirteen percent (13%) attend small private schools and units operated by the Ministry of Education.

c. Placement Procedure .

Individual organizations employ their own procedures relating to placement within their organizations. Referrals for placement may be made by a parent, teacher, medical professional or community member. However, eligibility for placement will be dependent on the results of a psycho-educational assessment confirming the diagnosis of intellectual disability. Placement is also dependent on space availability and age.

## **3. Vocational Training**

Children with intellectual disabilities participate in vocational training through the school programme in which they are enrolled. Inclusive training for school leavers with disabilities include Abilities Foundation, a programme being offered in collaboration with HEART TRUST/ National Training Agency and workshops operated by the government across the island. The

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only programme exclusively for adults with ID is operated by the JAMR, focusing on Art & Craft.

#### **4. Support Organizations**

a. The Non-governmental agencies that exclusively provide services to people with Intellectual Disabilities are:

- The JAID
- Special Olympics
- 3 d Projects
- Mustard Seed Community

There are over ten other agencies that provide inclusive services across the island.

b. There is no Government Agency that provides services exclusively to people with Intellectual Disability.

#### **5. Issues/problems to Solve In Order to Conduct Effective Supports**

The services offered to people with ID in Jamaica are inadequate to meet the increasing demand. Listed below are the issues or the problems to be solved.

##### **Early Identification/Diagnosis and Intervention**

The limited programmes available have resulted in long waiting lists and limited placements. A review of this service is necessary to meet the growing demand of children who remain under stimulated or move through the offered education system unnoticed until they are too old to access the special education programmes.

##### **Limited Resources/Personnel/Specialist Skills**

Resource constraints have contributed to reduction in service offerings. There is a paucity of specialist skills within the special education programmes to provide the necessary support for children with a variety of challenges. These include psychologists, Speech, Occupational and Physical therapists. This has resulted in staff burnout.

##### **Public Awareness and Acceptance of persons with ID**

While there have been pockets of success, persons with ID are not generally accepted within the community. There still exist misconceptions, negative expectations and stereotypical ideas about people with intellectual disability. They are not enjoying their right to participate in their communities.



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**Parent Support Programme**

A number of second generation PWID are currently being educated. A number of challenges relating to abuse and sexuality with this group of parents has arisen. Special support programmes also need to be instituted for parents of children with challenging or severe behavior problems. Because of finances their children attend school poorly, they have serious behavioural problems. They are also unable to attend to the medical needs of children and assist with homework.

**Employment Opportunities for persons with ID**

*Integrated Employment:* There are a number of persons who are skilled and employable but not given opportunities to participate in the integrated employment settings. Most of the relatively few adults who are currently employed on hold part-time or temporary positions. Many earn salaries that are lower than the minimum wage and are not able to generate sufficient income even to open a savings account.

*Sheltered workshops:* These are few in numbers. There are number of adults with sever ID who remain at home and not engaged in any activity. This would give them the opportunity to continue learning a skill while earning an income. Additionally, research has shown that people with moderate and severe ID who are not gainfully occupied after school age develop mental illness.

*Support for Entrepreneurship Initiatives:* There are number of persons who have acquired mastery in various skills areas. They are unable to access competitive employment but have capacity to manage a small business with support. The availability of financial resources to that could be given to skilled persons in the form of grants for the purposes of establishing their small business needs to be seriously considered.

**Training**

There are currently very limited opportunities for further training of persons with intellectual disabilities. Despite the fact that a number of training programmes exist, persons with ID are excluded by virtue of the fact that these sites are restrictive and lack special accommodations suited to the special needs of persons with intellectual disabilities.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Name: Roy O'Brian Reid
2. Country: Jamaica
3. Organization/Position: Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities [JAID]. Principal-Llandilo School of Special Education
4. Experience in fields and project/s- description of Projects

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#### COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAM for PWID

- A. Completion of the Plant Nursery: The foundation has already been constructed. The professional trainer is in place already. Students (12) are already in training and some of them have participated in at least job-experience programme.
- B. Acquire a Commercial Oven: This will facilitate the commercial production of baked products to, first of all, supply the need of the school population (176 persons). The trainer is already in place and students (15) are in training. Secondly, visitors can be supplied with items produced and local retail shops can also be involved in the distribution.
- C. The Wood Work programme and the Basket Weaving Programme compliment each other as wooden parts are combined with straw parts to create novelty products. Weaved packaging also create a greater appeal for our products.

The common brand for all products is 'SPECIAL HAND'. Many of the PWIDs who are graduates of the school and members of their household have been certified by the HEART Trust/ NTA.

#### 5. KNOWLEDGE ON INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

PWIDs have different characteristics as this is dependent on the type of disability that they have. However in general they can be described as individuals who have a capacity to learn. If they have limitations with academic instructions they will be able to learn a vocational skill.

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**A. General Assistance Services Provided**

- Income Tax Exemption
- NHT Benefits
- Identification Cards
- Hostel for Girls

**B. Other**

- Rehabilitation/ Self help Grant
- Economic Empowerment Grant
- School Fees/Books Etc.
- Scholarship – Margaret Moody Bequest
- Aids and Appliances
- Food packages

**CONCLUSION**

It is only fair that the members of households with PWID be given the opportunity to become advocates for their family members. The PWIDs comprise the group of persons with disabilities that is least capable of self advocacy. Hence, there is a need for partnerships. The proposed project should help with poverty alleviation and greater community self-reliance. Additionally, the esteem and self-worth of the PWID involved in the project should be vastly enhanced.

