

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES INCEPTION REPORT

1. Jamaica: General Information

Area: 10,991 sq km/ 14,244 sq mi

Population: 2,889,187

- Rural-1, 251,164.90
- Urban1, 451,135
 - **Age Structure**
 - 0-14 years 29 % male 428,643 / female 414,348
 - 15-24 years 21.8% male 318,132 / female 315,945
 - 25-54 years 36% male 514,172 / female 532,094
 - 55-64 years 5.5% male 78,510 / female 82,565
 - 65 years and over 7.7% male 100,820 / female 124,485

Life Expectancy Rate:

Total population: 73.44 years

male: 71.81 years

female: 75.15 years

Infant Mortality Rate:

Total: 13.98 deaths/1,000 live births

male: 14.55 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 13.38 deaths/1,000 live births

Maternal Mortality Rate:

Total 110 deaths/100,000 live births

Literacy Rate:

Total population: 87%

male: 82.1%

female: 91.8%

Unemployment Rate:

Total population 13.70 %

Health System

Total number of hospitals – 34

- Kingston and St Andrew – 15
- Portland - 2
- St Thomas – 1
- Clarendon – 3
- Manchester – 4
- St Ann – 1
- St Catherine – 2
- St Mary – 2
- St Elizabeth – 1
- St James – 3
- Trelawny – 1
- Westmoreland -2
- Hanover – 1

Major Industry

The major industries in Jamaica

- Agriculture
- Mining
- Tourism
- Oil refining
- Sugar
- Cement
- Chemicals
- Tobacco processing
- Textiles
- Flour milling
- Processed foods

Education System

Total number of schools – 1469

- All age – 348
- College – 71
- Infant – 45
- Junior High – 89
- Kindergarten – 155
- Preparatory – 46
- Primary – 446
- High School – 222
- Special School – 7
- Technical High – 14
- Tertiary – 5
- University – 7
- Vocational/Agricultural -

Region I. Kingston – Kingston, St. Andrew and Western St. Thomas;

Region II. Port Antonio – Eastern St. Thomas, Portland, Eastern and South Eastern St. Mary;

Region III. Brown's Town – Western and Central St. Mary, St. Ann and Trelawny;

Region IV. Montego Bay – St. James, Hanover and Westmoreland;

Region V. Mandeville – St. Elizabeth, Manchester and North Clarendon

Region VI. Old Harbour – Clarendon and St. Catherine.

The Jamaican education system ranges from infant to tertiary and has schools spread across the island. These schools are governed according to regions and are separated into public and private schools. Public schools at the primary and secondary levels are tuition free as the government provides free and compulsory education for children between the ages of six to eighteen years (6-18). There is a cost associated with most early childhood institutions as well as private preparatory schools across all levels.

Government-sponsored scholarships for public secondary schools are awarded based on students' success in an examination taken at age eleven. Students sit examinations at the end of grades eleven (Caribbean Examinations Council Secondary Education Certificate), and at Grade 12 (6th Form) the CAPE as well as the General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level. There are also segregated primary and secondary schools for children with intellectual, physical hearing and visual disabilities. Tertiary education is available through colleges and a number of national and off shore universities.

Laws Concerned with Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

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

The Policy is based on the human rights of people with disabilities, which will enable them to enjoy the benefits of full citizens, and to carry out the obligations of full citizens of Jamaica. The purpose of the policy is to:

Set guidelines and directions for the Jamaican Government for the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities, to assist government in strengthening its capacity to address disability issues as well as assist individual agencies to improve their capacity to address disability issues within their areas of functional responsibility.

The policy also serves to provide a framework for agencies of government to cooperate in developing and implementing policies designed to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities in all aspects of life and to assist government in implementing the United Nations' Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

Financial Assistance for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities has embarked on a drive to register persons with disabilities island wide. They have also introduced grants for persons with ID.

The council assists persons with disabilities with

- Income Tax Exemption
- NHT Benefits
- Identification Cards
- Hostel for Girls
- Rehabilitation/Self help Grant
- Economic Empowerment Grant
- School Fees/Books Etc.
- Scholarship – Margaret Moody Bequest
- Aids and Appliances
- Food packages

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)

1. The Jamaican Association on intellectual Disabilities (JAID) (formerly The Jamaican Association on Mental Retardation (JAMR)) 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 Intellectual Disability for many years and is today the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization of professionals and volunteers concerned about Intellectual Disability and other Developmental Disability. 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 that will facilitate the full integration and inclusion of persons with Intellectual Disability and other Developmental Disabilities in the society.

Mission :

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

2. 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

The 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.

The programme was developed in collaboration with the German organization, Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM). The programme currently operates in Westmoreland and is **now** a collaborative activity between JAID and Rural Services for Children with Disabilities (RSCD). It is centre as well as home-based.

Schools of Special Education

This is a programme that seeks to unleash the full potential of each student. The network of Schools of Special Education is the oldest and largest special education programme in Jamaica. It was founded in 1956, and is now jointly operated by the **Jamaican Association on Intellectual Disabilities and the Ministry of Education**. The schools provide education services to children with intellectual disability between the age ranges of 6-21yrs, through a network of schools island wide. The current student population is over 1400 with teachers, teachers' aides and other resource personnel. There are five (5) main schools each with its own principals and satellite units referred to as Learning Centres. These are:

- **Randolph Lopez School of Hope- Kingston**
- **Windsor School of Special Education – Spanish Town , St. Catherine**
- **Woodlawn School of Special Education- Mandeville, Manchester**
- **Llandilo School of Special Education- Sav la mar, Westmoreland**
- **Edgehill School of Special Education- St. Ann's Bay, St. Ann**

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 Savannah- 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)

Parents and Professionals in Partnership (PProP) is a strong parent support network Programme. This initiative of the Jamaican Association on Intellectual Disabilities was established in 1994, to provide a supportive environment for parents of Children with Intellectual Disabilities through advocacy, peer support, information sharing and partnerships between parent and professionals (Psychologists, Medical Doctors, and Lawyers etc.) who are also a part of the group.

PProP is a family centred programme, as it focuses not only on the child with disability but improvement of the quality of life of the family as a whole. The significance of PProP is centered on its strong historical roots, being established by JAID that was created through the advocacy of one parent Randolph Lopez, father of Laura Lopez, who was born with Down Syndrome.

As part of the partnership parents and professionals who are willing to act as mentors, counsellors and advocates within the organization are recruited and encouraged to have an open relationship which will facilitate free flow of information and impact public awareness and understanding of children with intellectual disabilities.

Adult Continuing Education

There is a vocational training programme for adults with Intellectual Disability functioning mainly within the moderate to severe levels. The programme provides them with the opportunity to continue to learn skills, achieve levels of mastery in specific areas, build self-esteem and gain work habits necessary to secure and maintain competitive employment or be engaged in small business ventures. Programme content is also geared at facilitating the acquisition of basic social, personal skills to maximize their potential for independent living within their communities.

This programme was introduced as a pilot programme in response to the increasing demand for the service in Kingston and St. Andrew with the plan to replicate the service in other locations across the island. The main components of the programme include:

- The Textile Art Training Programme is operated by the JAID in collaboration from HEART TRUST/National Training Agency. This is a competency-based programme divided into training cycles, each of which lasts for approximately six (6) months. At the end of each cycle the trainee is evaluated by an external assessor and is certified for areas of competence.

- Art & Craft Programme operated by JAID in collaboration with parents. While vocational training is offered a strong emphasis is placed on the acquisition of personal, social and recreational skills.

My position as a classroom/senior teacher in one of the special schools operated by the association requires that I carry out the following duties:

- Plan lessons for the social and academic needs of my students
- Supervise staff in the lower school
- Monitor and assist in planning for the school feeding programme
- Coordinate literacy activities
- Assist in the organization of sporting activities and major school events.

4. Community Development Programmes which include Intellectual disability issues as one of the activities.

In my capacity as prevocational teacher I assist students with job training and engage them in work experience programmes. I have found that even though our students are able to acquire the skills necessary for specific tasks business persons are hesitant in accommodating them at there places of business as they have expressed concern that they would not be able to provide the supervision needed in order for them to get jobs done. This sentiment has been expressed over and again and it limits the opportunities that are given to PWID.

There are however persons who have dedicated their time to assist the special schools by allowing our students to gain work experience in there places of business. This has yielded positive results and comments for most of our students as employers have expressed that they were surprised at the levels of professionalism and commitment to task that these students have shown. This has resulted in more community awareness and persons are now becoming more open to the idea of employing PWID. We are however a little way off as after students leave the special schools they often have a struggle to become gainfully employed.

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.

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.

The formal assessment to confirm the diagnosis of intellectual disability will likely take place when the child is about 6yrs. Although the team approach 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 services; 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 usually 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 only programme exclusively for adults with ID is operated by the JAMR, focussing on Art & Craft.

4. Support Organizations

a. There is no Government Agency that provides services exclusively to people with Intellectual Disability. However the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disability provides support for disabled persons island wide.

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

- The JAID
- Special Olympics
- Carberry Courts Special School operated by the Methodist Churches of Jamaica.
- 3d Projects
- Mustard Seed Community

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

1. Issues/problems to Solve

In Jamaica the services offered to people with ID are largely limited and are inadequate to meet the increasing demand especially in the rural areas. Some critical areas need to be addressed in order for the PWID community to operate at maximum potential to be contributing citizens. Services and intervention needs to be readily available at all levels and in both rural and urban areas in order for us to go forward with minimal challenges.

***Early Identification/Diagnosis and Intervention**

There needs to be an expansion of services available for the detection of children with intellectual disabilities as the services presently available are mostly available in the urban areas. Accessing the services also prove to be a problem as the services offered are not readily accessible as there tends to be a long waiting list and it is often when children are at school age that it is noticed that there is a disparity between the children who are suspected to have intellectual disabilities and their age peers.

Limited Resources/ Personnel/Specialist Skills

Special Education schools across the island are presently operating without the specialized services of key professional which include Speech, Occupational and Physical therapists. There is presently one clinical psychologist employed to serve all special schools operated under JAID. There is also a need for additional resource centres and skill trainers to equip the PWID with skill training.

Public Awareness and Acceptance of persons with ID

The society in general tends to have low expectations of persons with ID and is not educated as to the challenges they face and the abilities they have. Having ongoing public awareness campaigns and programmes is needed to enlighten awareness and acceptance of persons with ID.

Parent Support Programmes

Special support programmes need to be put in place for parents of children with challenging or severe behaviour problems, parents also have challenges relating to abuse and sexuality. Parents also need to be guided in getting skills to allow their children to achieve their full potential.

Employment Opportunities for persons with ID

There needs to be ongoing dialogue with business persons within the communities across the island. PWID are employable but are not readily given the opportunity to work and contribute to society. Parents of PWID need to be educated as to ways of getting employment opportunities for their children. PWID can be given the opportunity to become self employed.

Training

There are not many training programmes for persons with intellectual disabilities in Jamaica this is especially so in rural areas. There are generalized training programmes for persons of average intelligence. However it is often found that persons with intellectual disabilities are excluded from these programmes because of their inability to meet matriculation levels and the inability of these institutions to provide accommodation for PWID.