

## Intellectual Disability in Community Activities 2015 *Inception Report*

### **1.Jamaica: General Information**

**Area:** 10,991 sq km

**Population:** 2,706,500

Rural: 1,297,117

Urban:1,409,383

### **Life Expectancy Rate:**

**Total population:** 73.48 years

**Male:** 71.87 years

**Female:** 75.17 years

### **Infant Mortality Rate:**

**Total:** 13.69 deaths/1,000 live births

**Male:** 14.27 deaths/1,000 live births

**Female:** 13.08 deaths/1,000 live births

### **Maternal Mortality Rate:**

110 deaths/100,000 live births

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

**Literacy Rate:**

Total population: 95.39%

male: 92.52%

female: 98.36%

**Education**

The Jamaican educational system consists of four levels.

1. The **Early Childhood** Level: This level caters to students ages three to six years old.
2. The **Primary** Level: This level caters to students six to twelve years old (grades 1 to 6).
3. The **Secondary** Level: This level caters to students ages twelve to eighteen years old (grades 7 to 13)
4. The **Tertiary** Level: This level caters to students ages eighteen and onwards.

The Government of Jamaica provides free and compulsory education for children at the Primary Level, that is, between the ages of six to twelve years old. Secondary school education is accessible through private and public schools.

Government-sponsored scholarships for public secondary schools are awarded based on students' success in an examination (Grade Six Achievement Test –GSAT) taken at age eleven. Students sit final external examinations at the end of grades eleven (Caribbean Examinations Council Secondary Education Certificate - CSEC), and at Grade eleven/6<sup>th</sup> Form (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations – CAPE) as well as the General Certificate of Education (GCE), Advanced Level. 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 learning, intellectual, physical, hearing and visual disabilities.

**Unemployment Rate: 12.4%**

## **2. Intellectual Disabilities**

### **Laws Concerned with Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**

On Friday, October 10, 2014, the House of Representatives passed the long-awaited legislation, the Disabilities Act, to fight against discrimination on the grounds of disabilities. The Act proposes that persons with disabilities will enjoy the same benefits, rights and privileges as other Jamaicans in terms of employment, access to healthcare and education as long as they meet the required qualification

### **Financial Assistance for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**

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). Applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria of being a member of a poor family. These cash grants provide support which helps applicants to improve their attendance and access to meals in school and access to healthcare.

## **3. Outline of Organization**

### **I. Background: Jamaican Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

The Jamaican Association of Persons with 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 Intellectual Disability and is today the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization of professionals and volunteers concerned about Intellectual

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

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 be the National unifying organization in creating communities where persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities are empowered and fully integrated

### **Mission**

To provide services that will positively transform the lives of all persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities

## **II. Major Programmes**

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:

### **a. Schools of Special Education**

JAID and the Ministry of Education jointly operate the Schools of Special Education. There is an island network of twenty-seven schools five of which are main schools and twenty-two satellites schools. They cater to the needs of children with intellectual disabilities, their ages range from 4-20 years. The total student population is One thousand Four hundred and sixty-six with one hundred and forty trained teachers and one hundred and fifty non-teaching staff.

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

**b. Parents and Professionals in Partnership (PPROP)**

PProP, the parent support group of J.A.I.D was established in 1994 to offer:

- Parent training and advocacy
- a parent support network
- a medium for parent and professional interaction

**c. Adult Continuing Education**

A vocational training programme for adults with severe Intellectual Disabilities.

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

**III.** My position as **Vice Principal** is comprised of but not restricted to the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Assisting teachers in planning and reviewing instructional plans for students with intellectual disabilities
2. Supervising clerical and ancillary staff
3. Recommending personnel for promotion and training.
4. Preparing monthly administrative and financial reports
5. Convening meetings and training sessions to improve understanding of and ability to work with persons with I.D.
6. liaise with business managers, in both private and public sector to facilitate

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

opportunities for work experience placement.

7. Sensitize administrative and academic staff of regular schools and community members in general about persons with intellectual disability and their need for acceptance and support.
5. Provide support for students through coaching and supervision.
6. Sensitize parents on their roles and responsibilities and encourage their involvement in the school programme.

#### **4. Community Development Programme for Persons with Intellectual Disability:**

##### **(i) Project Goals and Objectives**

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

##### **The May Pen Outreach and Community Awareness Programme**

The primary goal of this project is to build awareness about the condition of Intellectual Disability and provide the forum for children and youths within the school programme to be exposed to opportunities to build advocacy, leadership and social skills. This is all in an effort to help them integrate smoothly into their communities.

##### **Objectives of the Programme**

##### **1. Public Education**

- a. To develop an improved sensitization programme about intellectual disability aimed at students in mainstream schools, parents and professional groups.
- b. To provide participants with a forum to increase their visibility and showcase their talent.

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

**2. Community Service**

- a. To help students to feel more confident in their ability to extend assistance to other vulnerable groups in their community.
- b. To encourage students to give back to the community in a structured and consistent way. This involves working with the elderly or other vulnerable groups on specific activities or seasons.

**3. Mentorship Programme**

- a) To improve and extend the involvement of student leaders of mainstream high schools in the parish. These leader-mentors will maintain regular contact with individual students and provide support to them in various ways such as:
  - (i) affirming their abilities
  - (ii) giving them tips on becoming more responsible and sociable
  - (ii) forming genuine bonds through leisure activities, skills sharing and other forms of interaction.

**4. Leadership programme**

To facilitate a more consistent involvement of a greater percentage of the student population in the following school programmes:

- a. **Clubs and societies** including Jamaica 4H, culture club and Special Olympics. Students assume leadership roles and are mentored by staff.
- b. **Student Council** which provides leadership on varying aspects of school governance
- c. **Self advocacy** through the performing arts. This involves participation in the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission and performances at events across the parish. This gives students an opportunity to showcase their skills and talents and change perceptions about their capabilities.

**5. Work Experience opportunities in the community.**

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

To broaden the band of partnerships with small and large organizations in the community in order to provide training opportunities in integrated work settings.

**b. Expected Outputs**

The project seeks to:

1. Build awareness about the condition of Intellectual Disability
2. Provide the forum for children and youths within the school programme to be exposed to opportunities to build advocacy, leadership and social skills
3. To develop participants' level of self-confidence to integrate smoothly into their communities
4. Sensitize persons to some of the stereotypic behaviours to which persons with intellectual disability are subjected.
5. Provide targeted training to build the capacity of parents so that they can be better involved in the development of their children.

**c. Inputs of Implementing Organizations**

The Windsor School of Special Education under the auspices of the Jamaican Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID) will spearhead this project. Support will be sought from agencies, individuals and groups such as:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities)
- Clarendon Group for the Disabled
- Clarendon 4H Club
- Schools' Club Leaders



**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

- The Local Business Community
- Local Government representatives
- PPRop
- Parents
- Mainstream schools in the community

The components of the project include:

- Utilizing fora such as P.T.A. and Club meetings in schools, citizen association meetings and others to help decrease misconceptions, negative/ low expectations, and stereotypical ideas about people with intellectual disability.
- Utilizing the performing arts as a public awareness medium

## **2. Activities**

The following activities will be carried out with participants with Intellectual Disability

- Co-ordinate seminars on building self-esteem and improving social skills
- Plan Open Days to invite members of the community to view students in their training environment and some of the materials they produce
- Develop and distribute materials to educate participants.
- Create a schedule for presentation of the Play as a fundraising and public awareness activity

## **5. Intellectual Disability in Jamaica**

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

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

**Table 1 Services to People with ID**

<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 (Disabilities Act, 2014) to facilitate access	Vocational Skills Training
	Employment Opportunities
	Social and Recreational Programmes

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

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

Special education in Jamaica was pioneered by NGOs that have over the years, been responding to the 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 workshops.

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**

- **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.

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

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

- 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.

- **Education**

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

a. 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 JAID in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The remaining thirteen percent (13%) attend small private schools and units operated by the Ministry of Education.

**b. 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.

- **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 intellectual disability 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 JAID, focussing on Art & Craft.

- **Support Organizations**

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

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

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

- JAID
- Special Olympics
- Genesis Academy
- 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.

## **6. Issues/problems to Solve**

The services offered to people with ID in Jamaica are largely limited and where the pockets of services exist, they are inadequate to meet the increasing demand. The following have been identified as major areas that must be addressed before persons with ID in Jamaica can benefit from the support needed to facilitate integration within the wider community. These include:

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

The services offered are limited. The limited programmes available have resulted in long waiting lists and limited placements with the majority available in urban settings. Expansion of this service is necessary to meet the growing demand for the services and reduce the number of

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

children who remain under-stimulated or move through the 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 clinical 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 or very low expectations, and stereotypical ideas about people with intellectual disability.

### **Employment Opportunities for persons with ID**

There is a limited number of persons in integrated employment settings. Most of the relatively few adults who are currently employed only hold part-time or temporary positions. Many earn salaries that are lower than the minimum wage and are not able to generate sufficient income to maintain themselves let alone open a savings account.

There are a number of persons with the interest and physical ability to be trained in various skill areas and even those who have a skill but are unable to access competitive employment yet have the capacity to manage a small business with support of organizations and/or family members.

**CLAIRE K. JACKSON-DAVIS**

**The Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID)**

**March 30, 2015**

The availability of grants to assist them in establishing income generation projects is essential for this group

### **Conclusion**

Services for persons with disabilities should be provided, whenever possible within the existing health, education, labour and social structure of society. These include all levels of health-care; primary, secondary and tertiary education; general programmes of vocational training, employment opportunities and social services. The most desirable outcome is obtained if persons with disabilities are integrated with all other people, in the family, in the schools, at work, in training and educational establishments, in housing, in community affairs including recreational opportunities, and *importantly* in the decision-making process. This will inevitably impact the abilities of persons with disabilities to not only interact harmoniously with members of their community but also access and enjoy the relevant services offered in their country just like any other citizen.