Jamaica Diaspora

2ND BIENNIAL
ADVANCEMENT IN EDUCATION SUMMIT

March 23-24, 2016

Jamaica College
189 Old Hope Road, Kingston 6, Jamaica, W.I.
Our vision is that Jamaicans, wherever they may be, are able to achieve their fullest potential.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW - MESSAGES

From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
From the Ministry of Education
From the Embassy of Jamaica to the United States of America
From the Jamaica Teachers Association
From the Jamaica Diaspora Institute
From the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force

OVERVIEW - EVENTS

Itinerary

Programme—March 23 - 24

Views from the Diaspora
Message from the Honorable Minister of Education

Sen Ruel Reid

for the JTA’s Diaspora Summit in Education 2016 Magazine

The Ministry of Education joins the voices of commendation for the Jamaica Teachers’ Association and the Jamaica Diaspora Task Force for organizing the 2016 Education Summit! This forum will provide a platform for innovation and partnership which should support the spread of sound education practice and thinking.

There is an increasing gap between the kind of education systems that are currently available and the kind we need to meet the demands of future generations. We need to fundamentally rethink our approach to education to make it more relevant to the real challenges of people’s daily lives.

The Ministry of Education has recognized the need for more fluid and mutually beneficial partnerships which focus on collaborative action across sectors and at every level. We have dedicated significant resources in this regard as these partnerships are essential to the training and continued growth and development of our people. The types of partnerships which we envisage hold vistas for the kind of society we seek to create - a society in which ‘outside the box’ thinking flourishes, while excellence in service remains paramount.

As we forge ahead with initiatives aimed at more meaningful engagement of Jamaicans in the Diaspora and friends of Jamaica, we are committed to providing more opportunities for dialogue and advocacy, so that we can advance our mutual interests and address national concerns.

The Education Ministry, through its executing agency the National Education Trust (NET), is poised and strategically positioned to co-ordinate philanthropic support and other endowment initiatives aimed at benefiting our people.

I have every assurance that meaningful collaboration between the Jamaica Diaspora Task Force and the NET, the executing agency which enables and maintains investments in Jamaica, will go a far way in bringing to fruition, projects designed to transform our education system.

The NET is to be seen as that quintessential nerve-centre for your continued engagement and interface with the education sector.

Indeed with the sustained assistance of the Jamaica Diaspora Task Force, we will continue to lay that solid foundation, block-by-block, and redouble our efforts at securing a brighter and more prosperous future for this generation and others to come.

With sustained zeal and determination, I am confident that your commitment to Jamaica’s development will augur well for future generations. God Bless You.

Senator the Honourable Ruel B. Reid

Minister of Education, Youth and Information
It is fortuitous that the 2nd Biennial Advancement in Education Summit 2016 and the Jamaica Teachers’ Association’s Middle Managers Workshops are being staged from 21st to 24th March 2016, at the start of the new administration of the Government of Jamaica, of which I am proud to be a part.

This happy coincidence of events allows us to reflect on the objectives of the new Government in relation to education and development, including achieving full literacy and numeracy by the end of primary school; strengthening teaching skills, school leadership and management skills; expanding school facilities and infrastructure; improving levels of teaching resources; reducing violence and anti-social behaviour; and stimulating greater parental involvement.

These are lofty aims that we believe are within our reach, provided that we pursue them on the basis of a shared vision, adopt policies based on best practices and implement a sound framework for programmes and plans. In essence, we believe in a partnership for prosperity that includes education and development as a major plank and which fosters healthy, educated and socially well-adapted citizens.

Against this background, I extend my hearty congratulations to the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force on the staging of the 2nd Biennial Advancement in Education Summit 2016 and Middle Managers Workshops, in collaboration with the JTA. The initiative of the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force to stage these events is entirely consistent with the objective of the new Government of Jamaica to engage the Diaspora to contribute to national development in a coordinated way. I therefore use this medium to underline our commitment to deepening and strengthening the relationship between Jamaicans at home and in the Diaspora through revitalised initiatives and innovations to take the engagement to another level.

At the same time, the theme “Jamaica–Diaspora Partnership: Solidifying Gains, Achieving More” is both timely and relevant, as the Government seeks to create a framework to facilitate the greater use of technology in the science and art of teaching. Indeed, since its inception, the Taskforce has focused on teacher development and the use of Information and Communications Technology in the classroom. I believe also that the focus on early childhood and special education is particularly commendable, as you engage stakeholders across the island to address gaps and challenges in these critical education sectors.

As we continue to make strides to transform our educational sector, I invite the Diaspora from all generations and across all boundaries to continue to invest in building this great nation, Jamaica. I also recognise with appreciation the members of the Diaspora for their consistent contributions over the years, particularly in education, healthcare and community development.

Senator The Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
His Excellency

RALPH S. THOMAS
Jamaica Ambassador to the United States of America

The Embassy of Jamaica in Washington DC fully supports the various initiatives of the Diaspora, that impact the growth and development of our country, Jamaica. Our work in this regard, has been made easy by the many Jamaicans in the United States, who, notwithstanding their physical distance from home, are as committed to participating in nation-building and to giving back in real and meaningful ways, as those at home.

Education has been one of the main sectors in which Diaspora support for Jamaica has been most visible. The Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force (JDETF) is making a significant imprint on the Jamaican educational landscape and has established a model for the Diaspora that is being replicated by other sectors of Diaspora engagement. The JDETF’s methodology of identifying gaps in our system through fact-finding, engaging and establishing partnerships with the relevant Jamaican and United States stakeholders, coupled with a STEM-based approach to education, is already reaping benefits.

I applaud the tremendous efforts of all those individuals who, outside of their everyday responsibilities make the time to meet and plan towards this Summit, even drawing on their own resources and expertise to ensure that the objectives of the Summit are met. This 2nd Summit will be critical in helping to move forward on the foundational work laid by the first which was held in 2014, the outcome of which included the landmark 6-Year Plan and other initiatives. This year, you have widened the scope of your engagement by including a workshop to provide critical training for those mid-level professionals who will become the next set of leaders in the educational system. We note also the focus on Early Childhood and Special Education sectors.

With the Summit set to engage over 700 participants, from both the Diaspora and other stakeholders in Jamaica, it is clear that the commitment to strengthening the partnership towards improving education in Jamaica is a matter of priority. This speaks well for the future of our country.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful and fruitful Summit 2016.
"Once again the Jamaica Teachers’ Association is in partnership with the Jamaican Diaspora in staging the second Bi-Annual Education Summit. Through its work the Diaspora has effectively removed the boundaries in Nationhood generally, but in Educational endeavours specifically. Jamaicans abroad have always held their ground in support and defense of Jamaica's place in the global sphere, not just through our official representatives but to a great extent by the ordinary migrant Jamaican and their descendants.

There is evidence that Jamaican professionals are being recruited to fill positions of trust and reliability overseas. Here in lies the enrichment and further development of the Jamaican Diaspora. Your efforts at building the educational base of Jamaica land we love, could go a far way in improving Jamaica’s stakes in the balance of trade in human capital, as we seek to replenish our stock in the faces of increasing evidence of "skills for remittance" exchange.

Overseas markets require and seek to recruit the brightest and the best. Your efforts and our continued collaboration will assist in guaranteeing that “the rest is of the brightest and the best" with marketable surplus to satisfy the trade. The Jamaica Teachers’ Association is not unaware of the vast knowledge, skills and experience residing in and among the Diaspora. Jamaica is the appreciative beneficiary of your positive attitude to the need for sharing and collaborating. Education has been described as the great equalizer but the process can be stymied by ever attempting to reinvent the wheel. The Jamaican teachers are mindful of best practices across the world that we do not have a template for. The Jamaica Teachers Association is proud that our local teachers are quality innovators and is eager to lead the process of sharing our best practices with the rest of the world. Here in lies the need for and opportunity to collaborate. The Jamaica Diaspora Education Summit is therefore apt and timely on the road to fulfilling our common objective of empowering the Jamaican people wherever they are domicile do in the world."

Norman Allen
President
The reality of a second Diaspora Education Summit is a clear symbol of sustainability born out of the tenacity of purpose displayed by a core group of educators and patriotic Jamaicans residing overseas, in collaboration with local stakeholders. The stick-to-it-iveness of the team, led by Mr. Leo Gilling, is to be applauded. By extension, the contribution of every member of their time, energies, personal resources, technical expertise and constant availability is to be met with gratitude. Their openness to collaboration and networking, as well as the general willingness to share resources, are worthy of emulation. Salutation must also be accorded to the Jamaica Teachers’ Association for being a faithful partner and for registering its support in tangible ways. In so doing, the Association has distinguished itself, not only for being the most potent trade union and professional organization in the country, but also as a model cooperate organization with an expanded intrust of advancing the holistic development and the general welfare of Jamaica. The enabling roles of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information have been indispensable in facilitating the continued growth and development of the Jamaica Educational Taskforce in its thrust to positively impact the Jamaica Education System.

It is a time to celebrate the incremental gains, align ourselves to the current trends and realities and commit to a path of continuous positive engagements. In recognition of the fact that education is everybody’s business, this current partnership must be expanded to get other stakeholders involved. All hands must be on deck to serve our fellow citizens.

Every lofty goal of this rock we call Jamaica is at risk of toppling if we do not educate our people. It is through education that we will be able to free ourselves from mental slavery. It is through education that we will be able to empower the nation’s children to remain relevant in a country, and by extension, a world which is perpetually evolving.

As we mark this milestone of achievement and arrival, let us be cognizant of the fact that every point of arrival must also be seen as a point of departure. The exciting buzz of this second Education Summit must attend to some crucial questions; who are the persons and organizations who will be enlisted in this army of Education Ambassadors on a Mission? What are the immediate and long term challenges that must occupy our attention? and, How do we continue to maintain our relevance while continuing to impact the Jamaica Education System in a positive way?

It is time for us to embark on a deep intrinsic examination of ourselves as individuals and as a group with a view to recommit to playing our role in the advancement of our nation’s children and by extension the fortunes of Jamaica Land We Love.

Mark Nicely
Deputy Secretary General
Member Services & Industrial Relations
Professor Neville Ying CD, FIMCJ, PhD

Professor Neville Ying is Executive Director, Jamaica Diaspora Institute and Professor (Hon), Educational Measurement, Mico University College.

Professor Ying has had a distinguished career in the public sector, private sector and Higher Education institutions. His research and consultancy work span the areas of Diaspora Governance and Engagement, Strategic Thinking, Transformational Leadership. He is internationally recognized for his expertise in Labour and Employment Relations, Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Development.

Some of the positions in which he has served are: Executive Director, Mona School of Business, Professor of Business Development, Director of Labour Studies, Director of Business Development, Co – Director, Centre for Leadership and Governance, University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona; Group Vice President, ICD Group of Companies; Chairman and Executive Director, Institute of Management & Production (now the University College of the Caribbean); Project Manager, UWI/USAID Management Education Project with responsibility for establishing, at the UWI, the EMBA Programme and the Mona Institute of Business (now the Mona School of Business and Management), member of the Senate, UWI, International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva, Global Dialogue Facilitator, Rio + 20 United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development, Brazil, Member of the Diaspora Technical Committee of Experts Meeting, South Africa.

He currently serves as member, National Partnership for Jamaica Council, Chairman Overseas Examinations Commission, Pro Chancellor and Chairman Board of Management, Mico University College, Chairman Jamaica Flour Mills Foundation, Chairman Advisory Board, Management Institute for National Development (MIND), Technical Advisor Measurement and Evaluation, for CXC; member of the Septennial Review Committee for the University of Technology and Chair of the Evaluation Sub-Committee.

His academic background spans Mathematics, Physics, and Psychometrics (Measurement, Statistics, Research Designs), and Strategic Management. He holds a Teachers’ Diploma, Mico College, B.Sc. UWI, M.A. and Ph.D. University of Maryland, USA.

He has presented over 100 papers at a wide range of local, regional and international conferences and symposia and has published articles in internationally recognized journals.

He has received numerous awards including the Jamaican National Honours of Commander of the Order of Distinction, Mico Gold Medal and the Pelican Award, UWI.
Summit 2014 seems like just yesterday. Two days of advancement in education – in Montego Bay and Portmore, the tours to the special education facilities in Kingston and St. Andrew, two hours in discussions with USAID, one day of Wrap Up; a total of four full days of activities for teachers, Diaspora delegates and the stakeholders in education. That was the beginning of the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force’s contribution to achieving the goals of Vision 2030 Jamaica.

Two years and several initiatives later, the JTA, the government of Jamaica and the Diaspora are once again collaborating to deepen the relationships with the educators by listening, sharing and designing plans towards the transformation of education under the theme Jamaica-Diaspora Partnership: Solidifying Gains, Achieving More.

I am pleased to greet you on behalf of the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force (JDETF). We have come quite a way since August 2013 when the force first met. The fruits of the partnerships with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Ministry of Education, and the Jamaica Teachers’ Association are ripening and we are seeing how important those sessions were two years ago.

So much has been accomplished as a result of the willingness, the commitment, and the love for Jamaica:

The ExSeed Partnership with Loma Linda University for the teachers exchange project enters its third year of teachers learning to teach STEM, Project 100 Tablets becomes an expansion of the ExSeed training this summer, the Diaspora’s support and participation in the conference of the Jamaica Association of Guidance Counselors in Education was successful, the Camp Summer Plus partnership with USAID, the Ministry of Education, and the Issa Trust Foundation was a phenomenal success in part because of the 390 3rd grade children who were the beneficiaries, the development of new partnerships with the University of Minnesota is expected to bear fruit for the next school year, and months of planning and discussions on the Middle Managers’ Workshops is another outcome of the 6-Year Plan come to life.
Our strategic planning meetings in Florida last October/November saw a delegation from Jamaica and several regions of the global Diaspora gather to set the stage, set the tone and theme of what is presented here this week. Similarly, the fact finding “needs assessment” visit to Jamaica by the Diaspora team to prepare for the Middle Managers’ Workshops proved to be essential to executing the 2-day JTA workshop event 21st – 22nd March. We are happy that the Jamaica Teachers’ Association saw it important to involve the Diaspora in this worthwhile mission.

The Advancement in Education Summit, a Diaspora brainchild, on 23rd March is an attempt for the Diaspora to form bonds with teachers, principals, parents, administrators and even students to understand the gaps and challenges, and share ideas and best practices. This approach brings the salient points into the 6-Year Plan of development for transformation. Overwhelming gratitude to the JTA for their forward thinking in continuing the alliance with the Diaspora and encouraging our participation in advancing education.

Recognition and kudos to organization and groups such as UJAA, BACE, JAAC, the Kiwanis Club of Lauderdale Lakes, Food For the Poor, the Office of the Jamaican Ambassador to the USA, the Ministry of Education, the Diaspora and Consular Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, all of whom have worked tirelessly with the JDETF this past year.

Developing alliances and partnerships has worked magically for the JDETF. Within the Diaspora the bonding of the Union of Jamaican Alumni Associations, (USA) Inc, (UJAA) made a very important and strategic move when an agreement was reached to have UJAA become the Fiscal Sponsor for the JDETF. Now the time has come for the JDETF to raise funds in order to engage more programs to assist in those items recorded in the 6-Year Plan and, by extension, do our part in transforming education in Jamaica.

I welcome this opportunity to share our achievements and categorically include the stakeholders here in Jamaica and in the Diaspora. This Summit presents proof that the right steps have been taken to lead us to that long lasting partnership between the Diaspora and our “Jamaica Land we Love”.


Itinerary

March 19 & 20
Arrival and registration of overseas participants

March 20
Planning Meeting—Jamaica Teachers’ Association

March 21 & 22
Middle Managers’ Workshop—Jamaica College

March 23
Education Summit—Jamaica College

March 24
Wrap Up Session
NATIONAL EDUCATION TRUST (NET) is a Registered Charitable Organisation which was established in 2010 by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to generate resources that can help to improve educational outcomes in Jamaica. The role of the Trust is multifaceted and ranges from garnering endowments, facilitating donations of education resources to construction management. With the guidance of a Board of Directors comprised of executives from the private, public and non-governmental organisations, the role of the Trust is multifaceted and ranges from garnering and investing endowments, facilitating donations of education resources to construction management.

Since its inception, the Trust has been working assiduously on a number of initiatives designed to increase the resources available to the education sector. Many of these activities have been largely geared towards the implementation of the strategic objectives of the MoE, which include the elimination of the shift system and the replacement of pit latrines, the reduction of overcrowding in schools and the provision of early childhood facilities.

In conjunction with Jamaica Customs, the Trust developed clear guidelines and processes for handling equipment, material and supplies that are being donated to the education sector. This initiative was undertaken to relieve the levels of frustration experienced by stakeholders as they seek to navigate the bureaucratic process when making donations. These guidelines are currently in use and we have been ensuring that donors from the diaspora are getting well-needed resources to the schools of their choice. Between May 2015 and January 1, 2016 NET processed donations from the diaspora totalling US$94,199.28.

Partnerships are the backbone of our education system and we recognise that a part of our mandate is to promote and facilitate philanthropy for education. We are employing a number of strategies to establish closer relations with the diaspora, donors and other stakeholders in the education sector. Our goal is to be accountable to those who are willing to make sacrifices to foster developments in education and to encourage others to give so that we can meet our objectives.

How can NET help you?
♦ NET will coordinate donations and assist you in navigating the education system. Once contact is made, NET has responsibility for liaising with the respective schools, agencies, GOJ Ministries and Departments of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information to ensure that your expectations are met and that ultimately the children benefit from your initiative.

♦ NET is accountable to you, the donor, and will provide timely reports on the progress being made.
NET is there to ensure that the needs of the education system are met through a streamlined system for accepting donations. In this regard, we will direct you to the areas of greatest need, which will ensure that the benefits are distributed in an equitable manner. In essence NET will guide and monitor contributions to the education sector.

NET will also ensure that interventions are targeted and measurable.

What has NET accomplished?
Among our most recent accomplishments is the management of the partnership and the construction process for the Seymour Edwards Infant School in Clarendon. This school is a gift to the community of Sunnyside from the Seymour Edwards Trust. This is an example of the type of philanthropic venture, which we hope will reignite a pattern for infrastructure development across Jamaica, which saw the establishment of education facilities such as Jamaica College and Wolmer’s High School in the 18th century.

During 2015, we also completed the renovation project for the Fidel Castro Campus of Anchovy High School. This project was instrumental in assisting the school to relieve overcrowding at Anchovy High. NET has also managed classroom expansion in several of our schools island wide, promoting a more conducive learning environment at these institutions. For the period 2013-15, through partnerships, sanitary facilities at 61 schools were upgraded (removal of pit latrines). In addition, 2 secondary schools, 1 primary school and over 81 additional classrooms were built under the management of NET.

Our ultimate aim is to be a key stakeholder in an education system that is well-resourced to produce critical thinking, life-long learners who will contribute to realising Vision 2030, making Jamaica “…the place of choice to live, work and raise families”.

Let us help you to be part of this vision for Jamaica. Please feel free to contact us at info@net.org.jm or visit our website www.net.org.jm
2nd ADVANCEMENT IN EDUCATION SUMMIT 2016
MARCH 23 & 24, 2016

PROGRAMME
23rd March – Jamaica College, 189 Old Hope Road, Kingston 6

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. REGISTRATION

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. OFFICIAL OPENING
National Anthem
Devotion
Chairman’s Welcome and Remarks
Greetings
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Mr. Leo Gilling
Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force

Remarks – Mr. Norman Allen, President, JTA
Keynote Address – Ministry of Education

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. BREAK
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  PANEL PRESENTATIONS: *Strengthening Partnerships for Education Transformation*

Early Childhood Commission

Special Education

Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission

Jamaica Association of Principals of Secondary Schools

National Education Inspectorate

National Education Trust

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.  LUNCH

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Early Childhood

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary

Special Education

- Primary

- Secondary

- Tertiary

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.  BREAK

2:45 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  DEBRIEFING

3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  CLOSING

Entertainment

Message of Inspiration and Hope

Vote of Thanks
JDETF 2nd BIENNIAL ADVANCEMENT IN EDUCATION SUMMIT 2016
WRAP UP SESSION

Thursday, 24th March 2016
OFFICE OF JAMAICA TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION
97 B Church Street, Kingston

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PURPOSE:
To consolidate areas of Diaspora support for Education Transformation 2016-2018

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AGENDA

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.    Moderator’s Welcome and Opening Remarks

9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.    Diaspora Achievements from Summit 2014

9:30 a.m. 9:45 a.m.    BREAK

9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.    Rapporteurs’ Presentation

10:15 am. - 11:30 a.m.    The Way Forward: Diaspora Support for Education Transformation in Jamaica 2016 - 2018

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.    Closing Actions/Remarks
DIASPORA EDUCATION TASK FORCE

IN THE BEGINNING...

Following the 5th Biennial Diaspora Conference held in Montego Bay, Jamaica in June 2013, Jamaicans and friends of Jamaica in the Diaspora from the USA, Canada and UK, under the leadership of the Diaspora Advisory Board Member in the West/Midwest USA, met to discuss using their resources and expertise to support the education system in Jamaica. Thus was born the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force (JDETF).

The JDETF, the subsequent nomenclature of the Diaspora delegation and their supporters throughout the Diaspora regions, benefitted from the support, participation and leadership of organizations such as the Union of Jamaican Alumni Associations (UJAA), Jamaica Impact, Inc. (JAMPACT), Jamaica Awareness Association of California, (JAAC), and Sam Sharpe Teachers’ College (SSTC).

FIRST STEPS...

Immediately following that first conference call on Sunday, August 11, 2013, the half dozen Diasporans on the call determined that partnership and collaboration with stakeholders in Jamaica must be included in their plans and mission towards contributing to VISION 2030. Led by Leo Gilling, the then Advisory Board Member for the West/Mid-West USA, several stakeholders were approached to participate in hosting The Advancement in Education Summit 2014 in Jamaica from February 18 to 21.

SUMMIT 2014...

The Summit was planned essentially as a fact finding mission aimed at listening and learning more about the current state of the education landscape in Jamaica. Under the theme: “Advancing Education initiative - A Strategic Alliance with the Jamaica Diaspora”, the Summit attracted close to 500 attendees, with a wide cross section of the audience from Jamaica and the Diaspora regions around the world. The audience was comprised of:

- Principals - Teachers - Administrators - Counselors - Parents - Students -
  Student Council Executives - Parent Teachers Associations – Guidedance Counselors -
  members of the Diaspora.

The primary stakeholders were the Jamaica Teachers’ Association (JTA), The Ministry of Education (MoE), The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT), Victoria Mutual Building Society (VMBS).

The end result of the Summit produced the 6-Year Plan to advance education by investing in the future of schools, teachers and students.
2014 to 2015...SO FAR...

Immediately following Summit 2014, the DETF and the JTA formed an agreement to advance education for students and teachers - engage Diaspora organizations as well as organizations in Jamaica to support the Education Task Force in their commitment to make a difference across the education landscape in Jamaica and provide a forum for empowering teachers in Jamaica.

**ExSeed Program Exchange**: ExSEED is an innovative and collaborative program designed to enhance integrated STEM education in K-12 schools. The goal is to collaboratively support and empower K-12 educators in teaching STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) disciplines.

Accompanied by the Jamaica Teachers’ Association’s President and President Elect at that time, five teachers travelled to Loma Linda University in California in the summer of 2014 to take part in a one-week STEM training to learn the methodology of using tablets to teach science in the classrooms of Jamaica. The teachers would return to Jamaica and apply a customised version of the program to their schools learning environment, essentially customizing the program for Jamaica. This exchange program was supported by the Diaspora Education Task Force, the JTA and Dr. Hansel Fletcher, the Assistant Dean of Graduate Student Affairs, Professor and Vice Chairman, Department of Basic Science in the School of Medicine at Loma Linda University. Those teachers are now networked with several teachers and lecturers across the United States, having acquired new skills and competencies.

**JTA Labor Day Project**: Several organizations and individuals supported this project with financial contributions towards physical upliftments and appliances to Paisley All Age School on the border of St. Andrew and St. Mary, Walkerswood All Age School in St. Ann, Ferguson Basic School in Mandeville and Refuge Primary School in Falmouth.

**Food For The Poor**: Several meetings and discussions were held in 2014 to engage FFTP as a partner in the Diaspora’s intentions to assist in building schools and supporting other projects to be undertaken jointly. They were supportive in the re-building of the Liberty Hill Primary School in St. Ann in 2014.

**Jamaica Association of Guidance Counsellors in Jamaica (JAGCE)**: The DETF participated in several meetings during the planning of their Annual Conference in December 2014. Contact was made and shared with the faculty of Social Work at the Sacramento State University and other universities across the USA. Areas discussed included Self Care, Best Practices, Trauma, among other areas of professional development.

**USAID’s Camp Summer Plus** was started in Jamaica in 2011 by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The program’s success led to further support in 2012 and 2013. However, it was on the verge of being cancelled because of a lack of funding when the Diaspora Education Task Force was introduced to Camp Summer Plus during the planning of the Diaspora Education Summit in late 2013.

The Diaspora Education Task Force saw this as an opportunity to provide assistance in their mission to advance education in Jamaica. After making their presentation to and meeting with representatives of USAID/Jamaica, $250K was assigned to administer and run CSP in 2015 with the Ministry of Education in partnership.

This project is a joint initiative of the Governments of Jamaica and the United States of America monitored by the Ministry of Education and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The goal of Camp Summer Plus is to improve literacy and numeracy skills among students in the early Grades (1 - 3) as they return to school after the long summer vacation. The promoted Grade 3 students in recent times have performed poorly overall in the Grade Four Literacy Test. Hence, USAID introduced this program to assist those at-risk students.

*Jamaica Diaspora - Advancement In Education*
THE 6-YEAR PLAN...

ADVANCEMENT IN EDUCATION SUMMIT 2014 SIX YEAR PLAN: The overall purpose of the Education Summit in Jamaica in February 2014 was for the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force to acquire sufficient information to develop a 6-year Plan of Action. The plan is focused on improving and supporting educational offerings, thereby ensuring that students and teachers at all levels have the tools to compete in an increasingly globalized community.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES:

* Encourage the support of education initiatives in Jamaica from private and public commitment in Jamaica and the Diaspora.

* Provide bursaries/scholarships for students and teachers at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

* Strengthen relationships/linkages with other Diaspora communities - in Canada, the UK and other regions in the USA.

* Fortify relationships with Friends of the Diaspora in Canada, the UK and other regions of the USA to garner support for the advancement of education in Jamaica.

* Support Jamaica Association of Guidance Counsellors in Education (JAGCE) with the participation of members of the Diaspora and friends of the Diaspora in workshops and conferences.

* Introduce programs to educate Diaspora Communities. (With assistance from the necessary government ministries).

* Facilitate and provide support for Teacher Empowerment programs between JTA and overseas Universities (e.g. Loma Linda University)

* Raise US$20 million in Global Fundraiser Projects. (Establish ground work and transparent process)

* Develop mutual relationships with Tertiary Education Institutions by providing continuing education for principals, teachers and school administrators with emphasis on Leadership

* Seek professionals/human resources from the Diaspora and friends of the Diaspora to promote the advancement of education in Jamaica.

* Pursue the administering of USAID Camp Summer Plus Program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

* Assist the appropriate entities in Jamaica to build, repair and enhance schools.

* Promote among members of the Diaspora the policies for sending educational material/supplies to Jamaica.

* Foster relationship with the Ministry of Education, Jamaica Teachers’ Association and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in Jamaica in hosting the Biennial Education Summit.

Jamaica Diaspora - Advancement In Education
For five weeks during the summer of 2015, July 6 to August 7, almost 400 Grade 3 students and parents from across 3 camps – Sam Sharpe Teachers’ College in Montego Bay, College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE) in Port Antonio, and Cedar Grove Academy in Portmore participated. As part of the education platform to help students achieve goals, careful thought was given to holistic learning. Concepts taught in the academic program were reinforced through enrichment activities in drama, dance, visual arts, physical education, music, and information technology. The selection process began in January 2015 to identify approximately 500 students across the island.

Several individuals and organizations in the Diaspora played a key supportive role in Camp Summer Plus 2015. The Issa Trust, the Organization of International Development, Food For The Poor, and Broward Alliance of Caribbean Educators were key supporters as well, contributing supplies to the health and nutrition components.

The DETF is working towards making CSP an annual program and making it a major part of the goals of their broad plans.

6th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference Day of Service: Conference 2015 culminated after three days of meetings, with a Diaspora Day of Service, serving communities across the island through a wide variety of projects. Jamaicans around the globe were invited to develop projects and share their skills, time and resources in community projects of their own choosing, anywhere in Jamaica. It was billed as an opportunity where “you can play a role in the positive change you want to see in the lives and circumstances of your fellow Jamaicans.”

The DETF chose to focus on early childhood development: “Strengthening Capacities for Improved Learning Outcomes” Presenting partners were the Early Childhood Commission (ECC), JAMPACT, JTA, SSTC and the UJAA.

Their service took the form of Early Childhood workshops and student teacher role activity hosted by Sam Sharpe Teachers’ College. Participants from Diaspora organizations presented projects and shared best practices. Also present and participating were school administrators, basic school principals who were our main focus as we needed to hear from them- hear their thoughts and issues thus providing the groundwork and opportunity to create and maintain long lasting relationships so we can work together to build a better Jamaica... starting with our youngest citizens in Jamaica.

We are working with the ECC to include them in the Diaspora Education Task Force 6-Year Plan and including them as another key stakeholder in the collaborations in education.

FUNDRAISING...

The DETF has turned their attention to fundraising when they thought the timing was opportune. This item on the 6-Year Plan is critical to the execution. The hope is to reach out to businesses in and friends of Jamaica and the Diaspora to participate in the advancement of education, to invest in the future of education, and to join the ever growing population of Jamaicans wanting an opportunity to give back.

To date, commitments have not borne fruit as expected. The stakeholders in Jamaica and the Diaspora who were mentioned earlier continue to stand committed to using their resources in support. Nevertheless, the Force continues to discuss ideas and means and to formulate the groundwork of legality, legitimacy and transparency to indicate seriousness, professionalism and commitment to advancing education in Jamaica.

Jamaica Diaspora - Advancement In Education
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Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force
Ministry of Education

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Jamaica Teachers Association
Special Education – True Education
By: Melanie S. Baker, M.Sc., Special Education

The Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force Special Education team has aligned itself with recent changes in special education, which has seen a realignment from a deficit model to a strengths based model. This shift arises from a redefinition of students previously considered struggling, lacking or having a deficit. Often times, special education has operated from the notion that its priority is to close the gaps that struggling students face. There is now significant challenge to this long held position. It is no more the status quo.

Consider instead that these students receiving special education services are not so much dis-abled as they are differently abled; and as such, they bring strengths and meaningful contributions to the learning process, to this transmission of knowledge between educator and learner. Special education then becomes an opportunity to create meaningful exchange among all learners and the educators who serve them. Every student brings something to the table, and has strengths which can be celebrated.  

(Continued on page 25)

UJAA and BASIC SCHOOLS
By Lesleyann Samuel
President, UJAA

Established in 1990, one of the primary objectives of the Union of Jamaican Alumni Associations (USA) Inc. is to promote academic excellence at all levels of schools in Jamaica with an emphasis on pre-secondary institutions - the basic, primary and all-age schools. As an umbrella organization of alumni organizations of primary, secondary and tertiary schools in Jamaica, UJAA has made the support of basic schools our priority for several simple reasons:

“Build a strong foundation, and the building will stand forever.” Very simply, we must begin at the beginning.

Unlike most secondary and tertiary schools, few, if any, basic schools have alumni organizations to support them.

There are many, many more basic schools than there are secondary and tertiary schools combined. This makes the need, in some ways, greater and more imperative.

(Continued on page 25)
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Views from the Diaspora Continued...

Special Education – True Education

(Continued from page 23)

Jamaica is in the uniquely enviable position of framing a national dialogue around special education at this juncture in history, a time of the metamorphosis of special education from its less comely parts into this celebration of the eclectic mix resulting from acknowledging the individuality of all learners and the potential of each and every one to reach towards their very best self. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said in one of his famous and often quoted expressions, “intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

Special education then commits to true education as it blossoms into a solemn engagement of all learners, engrafted into a rich qualitative experience by which all learners can strive to fulfill their potential, with the support of educators committed wholeheartedly to the journey of their students towards their very best selves.

UJAA and BASIC SCHOOLS

(Continued from page 23)

Since our inception, UJAA endeavored to fulfill its mission by:

Building Cousins Cove Basic School, Shelter and Community Center in Hanover in 2002. The school/shelter/community center can accommodate 120 students.

Establishing a Water Tank Project in 2006. Partnering with Rototech International Ltd., UJAA has provided over 145 tanks to schools across the island and adopting several schools, and supporting countless others.

As a part of the JDETF, UJAA hopes to assist in our national goal: “Every Child Can Learn; Every Child Must Learn.” The work of Jamaica’s Early Childhood Commission – “Investing Today for Tomorrow” - is a daunting one as they valiantly attempt to maintain an understanding of almost 3000 schools, develop and implement standards of teaching and learning, ensure physical, intellectual, and emotional growth with economical and feasible approaches. The JDETF and UJAA look forward to developing a strong and lasting partnership with this team because it is here that we lay the bricks for tomorrow’s stratospheres. Let’s begin at the beginning ... it’s a very good place to start ...
A robust education system with well-trained professionals at the tertiary level is the main vehicle to promote the development of a workforce in Jamaica that is central to a strategy for further development and sustained growth. We have made progress with several of our initiatives. In collaboration with the Jamaica Teachers’ Association we conducted a workshop during education week in April 2015 that was focused on innovative strategies to teach STEM. Five high school science teachers were hosted by Loma Linda University in July 2015 to participate in the Excellence in Experiential STEM Education (EXSEED) program. This intensive one-week conference is centered on mission-focused, integrative Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) learning. A total of 10 teachers over the past two years have attended this EXSEED conference at Loma Linda University. An additional 5 science teachers are already selected to participate in the 2016 EXSEED on the Loma Linda University campus. Furthermore, plans are now in the advanced stages to launch an EXSEED program in Jamaica to train approximately 100 science teachers in July 2016. This program is in collaboration with Loma Linda University, the Diaspora Education Taskforce, JTA and several government ministries. The Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining has made a commitment to provide the computer tablets for the participants of the July EXSEED conference. The impact of this training is already evident. One of the teachers who have participated in the EXCEED conference was award “Teacher of the year” at their institution. Reports presented to the JTA during Education week 2015, have also indicated enhancement in the STEM programs in the schools that have already participated in the EXSEED program.

We are excited with these positive developments and are committed to staying the course as a skilled and adaptable labor force is one of the most critical determinants and indispensable requirement for continual improvements in productivity, technology and innovation. This is consistent with Vision 2030 for Jamaica.
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