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A Sociolinguistic Profile of the Jamaican Deaf Community

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Abstract

This report describes a rapid appraisal sociolinguistic survey done in the Jamaican deaf community in Spring 2009. After six weeks of background research, three researchers collected data in six different Jamaican cities during three weeks in Spring 2009. Survey methods used to report the information given in this report include library research, sociolinguistic questionnaires, and participant observation. Results show that the Jamaican deaf community is functioning in a complex, multilingual situation. Because deaf schools were found to be the primary site of sign language acquisition in the Jamaican deaf community, the Jamaican deaf school system's movement toward bilingual and bicultural education, the increased use of Jamaican Sign Language (JSL) in the classroom, and the development of JSL resources, points to high vitality of JSL in Jamaica. Although Deaf Jamaicans take pride in JSL as their national language, American Sign Language (ASL) and Signed English are also used as lingua francas throughout the island. Jamaican Country Sign Language, which is used by a decreasing number of deaf Jamaicans in the St. Elizabeth Parish, is nearing extinction and will soon disappear from memory, unless steps are taken to document it. Although social access and deaf rights are increasing in Jamaica, deaf Jamaicans are eager to work toward community and language development, especially in the areas of interpreter training, education, and employment.

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1 Introduction

This report uses information gathered through background research and three weeks of sociolinguistic survey fieldwork[1] to describe the deaf community[2] of Jamaica and their sign languages. Jamaica is a small island that is located east of Belize, south of Cuba, and west of Haiti in the Caribbean Sea. See figure 1 (WorldAtlas, 2009).

Figure 1. Caribbean map

Jamaica is slightly smaller than the state of Connecticut with a land mass of approximately 11 thousand square kilometers (about 6,840 square miles). It is made up of three counties: Cornwall, Middlesex, and Surrey, which are further divided into 14 parishes. The terrain is mostly mountainous but the coastline is narrow and flat. Blue Mountain, in the east, is the highest peak at 2,256 meters (about 7,400 feet). The climate is tropical, with more temperate weather further inland; the hurricane season stretches from July to November.

As of 2008, 64% of the Jamaican population was employed in the service industry, while others worked in agriculture and industry. The majority of Jamaicans, 62.5%, follow Protestant Christianity, 2.6% are Roman Catholic, and 20.9% do not profess to follow any religion. 91.2% of Jamaicans are black with 6.2% of mixed race (CIA Factbook 2009). While English is spoken across the island, most Jamaicans also speak Jamaican Creole English (Gordon 2005), locally referred to as Patois.

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[1] We sincerely thank the Jamaican deaf community for your generous investment in this project. We hope this report will support you in future community and language-development efforts.

[2] Some culturally deaf people identify themselves as capital-D "Deaf", in order to focus on their cultural identity, rather than a lower-case d "deaf," focusing on audiological status. We recognize the diversity of perspectives and conventions for referring to def and hard of hearing people around the world. For the purpose of this report, we have chosen to use a lower-case "deaf" to be most inclusive of all deaf and hard of hearing people, regardless of their cultural and linguistic identification, with the goal of providing a broad perspective of Jamaica's deaf people groups.

Approximately 2.8 million people live in Jamaica. The capital and largest metropolis, Kingston, is home to approximately 652 thousand people (Wikipedia 2009). Other major cities are Mandeville, Montego Bay, and Brown's Town and, as expected, the largest deaf populations are located in these major cities. There is also a large genetically deaf population in St. Elizabeth parish (primarily in the towns of Junction and Top Hill). Figure 2 shows target-survey locations in Jamaica (map modified from the CIA Factbook 2009).

Figure 2. Target survey locations in Jamaica

2 Overview of disability in Jamaica

Although there are conflicting viewpoints about whether deaf people are members of the disabled community, most deaf Jamaicans indicate that they share experiences with disabled people in the broader Jamaican context. Societal views of disabled people in Jamaica are mixed, but several disability organizations indicate that increasing numbers of people consider disabled persons as being able to make valuable contributions to society. According to Wilson (2001), 40% of Jamaicans believe disabled children are sent by God, while 18% view the children as hosts of evil spirits, a punishment, or the outcome of the mother seeing a disabled person while pregnant. One-half of the Jamaican population believes that disabled people have a right to gain employment and 90% would help their neighbors who were housing someone with a disability, but 60% still view people with disabilities as a burden.

In 1992, several laws were passed to protect people with disabilities and provide them with income tax concessions. In addition, the inauguration of the first blind person to the office of Senator and Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security further transformed society's perspective of disabled people (Morris 2001). With less than one percent of the disabled population being employed (UNAIDS 2008), he encouraged employment of disabled people and accessibility of public buildings. The State Minister of Labour and Social Security has petitioned the Permanent Secretaries for an allocation of jobs for people with disabilities (Gilzene 2008).

In 2000, parliament passed the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD 2006) which declares equal opportunities for the disabled (Edwards 2004). However, since this policy is not legally binding, the government is developing a National Disabilities Act which would give legal rights to people with disabilities, the first of its kind in the Caribbean (Brown 2004). Due to all these changes, a 2003 International Disability Rights Monitor (IDRM) study of 24 countries in the Americas area ranked Jamaica as the fifth-best country in the Americas in terms of rights, services, and opportunities for people with disabilities (Edwards 2004).

There are several disability organizations in Jamaica (see table 1), some that work with the Jamaican Ministry of Labour and Social Security and all of which address challenges that the disability community is facing, such as discrimination, employment opportunities, and communication access (UNAIDS 2008, FAVACA 2007, Duff-Brown 2005, and Lim 2004). The director of the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD) indicates that there are more institutions serving the disabled community than ever before (Jamaica Observer 2004).

Table 1. Disability organizations in Jamaica

Disability Organization
Combined Disabilities Association (CDA)
Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD)
Disabled People's Organisation (DPO)
Jamaica Coalition on Disabilities
National Advisory Board for the Disabled
The Abilities Foundation
The Salvation Army

Government and disability leaders have urged media practitioners to be careful how they portray people with disabilities because of their power to influence public view toward those with disabilities (JIS Media 2008). Attitudes toward deaf and disabled people in Jamaica are often negative; both deaf and hearing people may refer to deaf people as "dumb," "stupid," or "slow-minded" (Goshen 2007). As a deaf girl from the Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf (CCCD) campus in Kingston said, "We are robbed, cheated, rejected, cursed, and abused because of our disability. We are seen by society as insensitive, stupid, and to have no set goals in life" (Barrett 2008).

Disabled population estimates in Jamaica range from 200 to 260 thousand (according to the 2002 census, UNAIDS 2008, and JCPD 2006). According to the 2001 census, 2.7% of the Jamaican population has a hearing loss (Nam 2005), approximately 7,500 people out of a total population of 2.8 million. The reported deaf population ranges from 7,500 to as many as 200 thousand (Kennewell 2009 and Gayle 2005), with estimates of 20% of the total deaf population residing in Kingston (Doelman 2008). This dramatic range could be due in part to definitions used and whether these numbers refer only to audiological status or a distinct cultural community that embraces sign language as its primary means of communication.

3 Research questions and tools

On this survey trip, we used a rapid appraisal (RA) approach to sociolinguistic survey, collecting and analyzing information to provide an overview of the language community situation in a relatively short amount of time. We investigated social factors that influence sign language use and language development, in addition to determining language classification, through participant observation (PO), sociolinguistic questionnaires (SLQs), wordlists (WLs), and recorded text tests (RTTs) which look into intelligibility of American Sign Language (ASL) in the Jamaican deaf community.

Prior to fieldwork, we used the Internet and library to gather related information and formulated a list of contacts for individuals and groups who currently or previously worked with the deaf community in Jamaica. We then contacted these individuals and groups to gather preliminary information and set up meetings for survey fieldwork. Our three main research questions (RQ) for fieldwork were as follows:

RQ1: *What sign language varieties do the Jamaican deaf communities use?*

To determine the sign language varieties used in Jamaica, PO, SLQs, WLs, and RTTs were implemented in diverse deaf communities throughout Jamaica.

RQ2: *Is Jamaican Country Sign Language in danger of extinction?*

In the parish of St. Elizabeth, where Jamaican Country Sign Language (Country Sign) is primarily used, PO and Country Sign texts were collected to document Country Sign. PO and SLQs were used throughout the island to better understand language attitudes toward Country Sign and its future.

RQ3: *What is the sociolinguistic situation of the Jamaican deaf community?*

PO and SLQs were employed during fieldwork to gather information related to language attitudes and acquisition, and other sociolinguistic factors such as deaf education, organizations, meeting places, and access and rights of the Jamaican deaf community.

The SLQ (see table 5 in Appendix B for the complete form) was designed to gather demographic and sociolinguistic information from deaf individuals involved with their local deaf communities. Table 2 is a descriptive list of the 17 SLQ participants (made up of nine males and eight females), between the ages of 12 and 50, with three to 25 years of education, in five different locations. Because choice of participants focused on the leaders of the community, our gathered information is most representative of the mainstream Jamaican deaf community and not of micro-cultures possibly present in the community.

Table 2. SLQ participants

Participant Number	Location	Gender	Age	Years of Education Completed
1	Kingston	male	23	14
2	Kingston	male	27	13-14
3	Kingston	male	25	12
4	Kingston	male	50	25
5	Kingston	male	36	17-18
6	Kingston	female	34	3
7	Kingston	female	43	11
8	Mandeville	male	35	10
9	Mandeville	male	30	20
10	Mandeville	female	31	20
11	St. Elizabeth	female	48	4
12	Montego Bay	female	26	11
13	Montego Bay	female	17	13
14	Montego Bay	female	17	10
15	Montego Bay	male	38	16
16	Brown's Town	male	12	6
17	Brown's Town	female	42	9

While on the field, we documented PO with typed daily field notes related to information from activities and conversations pertinent to our research questions. The analysis presented in this report is limited to results from PO and SLQs, with a maximum of 17 people being asked any single question in the SLQ. WL and RTT results will be included in other papers that report more comprehensive WL and RTT results from language-assessment work done in numerous countries throughout the Americas.

4 Sign languages in Jamaica

This section addresses language variation and use within the Jamaica deaf community. The results from background research, PO, and SLQs provide information about the Jamaican deaf community's use of and attitudes toward ASL, Signed English, Jamaican Sign Language (JSL), and Jamaican Country Sign Language. (We use the widely-used shortened version, "Country Sign" throughout this report for clarity and ease.)

According to various questionnaire sources, there appears to be a historical relationship between JSL and both ASL and British Sign Language (BSL). Reportedly, a British man began teaching BSL to some of the Jamaican deaf community in 1939; staffing of Jamaican Association of the Deaf (JAD)-operated schools originally came from Britain (Scott 2009 and Soutar 2009). Subsequently, North American missionaries promoted the use of Signed English and ASL in their deaf schools, which redirected the future of JSL.

4.1 American Sign Language and Signed English

Several deaf schools continue the use and acceptance of ASL and Signed English in their classrooms, but some are moving toward the promotion of JSL in their place. JAD and other sources perceive that ASL and Signed English are highly intelligible in the Jamaican deaf community, especially in areas with higher concentrations of North American workers. Currently, ASL and Signed English are mostly seen at the three schools that CCCD operates and at religious meetings.

Signed English is distinct from ASL in that it is a manually-coded system using word-for-word English grammar and often accompanied by initialized signs (signs that use a handshape that usually correlates with the first letter of the written word) and voiced or mouthed English. Therefore, it does not have a syntactic structure very distinct from spoken and written English, which ASL has. According to Warfel (2008), most of the CCCD campuses, hearing teachers, administrators, and interpreters use Signed English to communicate. Some sources report that Signed English is used in both the dorms and classrooms while others indicate that it is primarily hearing people in Jamaica who use Signed English. Some deaf contacts believe that deaf people should improve their ASL and Signed English skills so that they can use it as a lingua franca to better communicate with hearing people working in deaf-community development.

4.2 Jamaican Sign Language

The Jamaican deaf community views JSL as a distinct sign language from both BSL and ASL. JSL is now believed to be very different from BSL (Goshen 2009) and some reports point to a 75% overlap between JSL and ASL (Doelman 2008). Some people indicate that the main difference between JSL and ASL is cultural identity and the increased use of expression and body movement of JSL. JSL appears to have borrowed extensively from ASL lexical items, but there are also some uniquely indigenous signs. These are most readily seen when the ASL sign for the same concept is considered culturally inappropriate. For example, the ASL sign for "start" carries with it sexual connotations in Jamaica and a different sign is used by the entire community.

Although JAD has access to many ASL resources, they have begun a shift toward the increased use of JSL in their schools and are developing their own JSL materials. The Maranatha School for the Deaf in St. Elizabeth and the Jamaican Christian School for the Deaf (JCSD) in Montego Bay both reportedly use JSL in their classrooms. Training workshops and programs have been established by JAD to promote public awareness of JSL as a language. These have been done at the Justice Training Institute, National Housing Trust, Bustamante Children's Hospital, and the Dental Auxiliary School (Neaves 2005). In addition, 25 Jamaicans attended the Deaf Way II conference held at Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C. in 2002 and these participants came to a deeper understanding of the validity of JSL and deaf culture (JAD 2009).

4.3 Jamaican Country Sign Language

Approximately 40 deaf adults in Jamaica use Country Sign, a village sign language primarily seen in the parish of St. Elizabeth (Bent 2009). The former lack of deaf educational opportunities led the high percentage of congenitally deaf people in this geographical area to create their own sign language. Reportedly, Country Sign tends to be more highly iconic and incorporate more drama than JSL (Olson 1995). Country Sign users see their sign language as beautiful and have positive attitudes toward their unique language and community. Similar to other village sign language situations, Country Sign is used not only by deaf people but also by many hearing people in the St. Elizabeth parish.

Country Sign users have taught their sign language to the next generation for years (Loupe 2009) but the recent establishment of Maranatha School for the Deaf in the area, which uses JSL, has led to a diminishing use of Country Sign among the younger generation (Wilson 2005). Most deaf youth in this area are now bilingual in Country Sign and JSL and may code-switch between sign varieties in conversations with each other, or may choose not to use Country Sign at all. In response to this trend, older Country Sign users indicate that they are not concerned about the loss of Country Sign in their community as they see JSL as the future for sign language in Jamaica. Deaf people outside of the community may know a few Country Sign signs but some do not consider it a legitimate sign language. People who know only Country Sign and not JSL may not be able to engage in deaf events because of the predominant use of JSL. There are no published Country Sign materials, although the local deaf church has videotaped some Bible stories in Country Sign.

These attitudes toward Country Sign by its native users, the decreased acquisition of Country Sign by the younger generation and increased use of JSL in the local school, its lower status in the Jamaican deaf community, and its lack of corpus point to it being an endangered language. With little documentation, this unique community is facing the loss of their sign language, both in use and remembrance.

5 Sign language use

Questionnaire participants indicated that being deaf and signing well were the most important characteristics of people respected as leaders in the deaf community. In this section, we describe how deaf people learn to sign and factors that affect variation in their sign language use.

5.1 Language acquisition

Many deaf people in Jamaica sign, especially in the Mandeville area where estimates reach up to 95% of people with significant hearing loss. However, not all deaf people sign equally well. Deaf people who do not sign are more likely to be from the older generation or those who have not had much formal education. Most deaf people sign freely and with pride in public places, but others may feel shy or embarrassed and hide their signing, depending on their personality and level of identification with deaf cultural norms.

Deaf Jamaicans indicate that they learn sign language from many different places, including schools, family, friends, churches, JAD, deaf community events, and from foreigners. Of our 17 SLQ participants, some learned to sign soon after birth, while others were not exposed to sign language until their teenage years. All of them learned to sign either from school, friends, or family. Approximately one-third of our SLQ participants indicated that they have deaf family members. Figure 3 summarizes SLQ participants' sources for acquiring sign language.

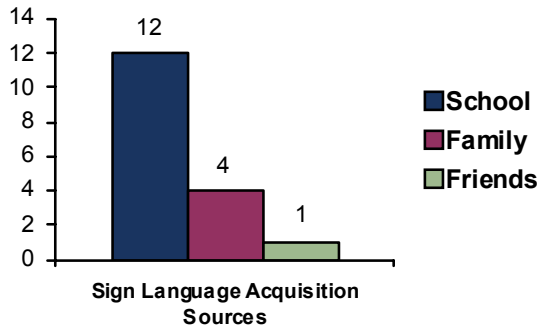

Figure 3. Sources of sign language acquisition

While the majority of deaf parents will teach sign language to their hearing and deaf children, approximately one-third of our questionnaire respondents indicate that some deaf parents may choose not to teach their hearing children to sign, depending on the situation and whether other family members are present to invest in teaching them to speak. In comparison, of 15 questionnaire participants who answered the question, nine SLQ participants indicate that hearing parents do not use sign language with their deaf children and six said that it depends on the situation. Of the approximately 10% of hearing parents that are reported to sign some, one source related that it is typically just enough to get by and not enough to have deep conversations. Figure 4 shows participants' perception of hearing and deaf parents' use of sign language with their deaf and hearing children, respectively.

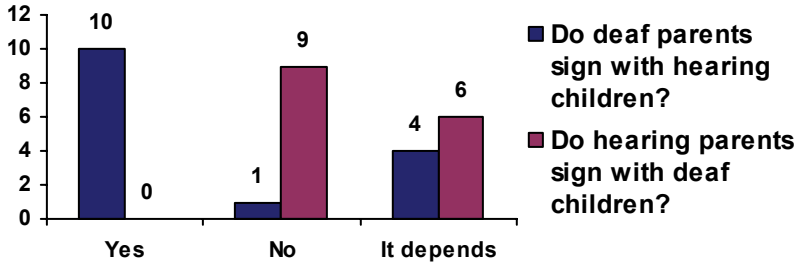

Figure 4. Perception of parents' decision to sign with children

Deaf Jamaicans indicate that both English and sign language are important for deaf people to effectively communicate, although some indicated that learning to sign is more important for a deaf person than learning English because of the ease and clarity of communication associated with sign language. Participants who felt using both languages were equally important indicated that using both enables fuller

communication in diverse domains. While 66% of questionnaire participants indicated that their English literacy levels were very good, the other one third indicated just average English literacy.

5.2 Language variation

Sign language variation is present in the Jamaican deaf community, both in JSL itself and in the use of JSL, ASL, and Country Sign. Regional location, educational background, age, hearing status, and social networks are all factors that influence a person's signing style.

Twenty-five percent of questionnaire participants indicated that not all deaf people in Jamaica use the same sign language. Twelve SLQ participants were asked to rank nine Jamaican cities with significant deaf populations based on the sign language that is easiest and most difficult to understand. Kingston and Mandeville tied for being the easiest to understand, while St. Elizabeth parish and Port Antonio were considered by far to have signing styles most difficult to understand. It appears from observation and questionnaire responses that the sign variety used in Kingston has the most prestige in the Jamaican deaf community.

Perspectives of the value of sign language standardization in Jamaica are split, with six indicating they would like it to be more standardized, six arguing against it, and three with no opinion. Those who want it standardized said that it would be hard to change, but a standardized sign language is ideal so that hearing people could communicate easier and become more involved in the community, interpreters could more easily work anywhere in the country, and deaf people would have less misunderstandings among themselves. Participants arguing against standardization remarked that unique differences are "cool," deaf people are curious about diverse cultures and respect differences, and keeping Country Sign is good for historical purposes.

The majority of questionnaire participants indicated that deaf people change their signing based on the hearing status of the people with whom they are communicating, but that exceptions may be made if the hearing person is highly involved in the deaf community. When signing with a hearing person, deaf people may match a hearing person's sign choice, voice or mouth more, sign more slowly, and use ASL instead of JSL. Hearing people who sign are perceived as less skilled than deaf signers, except in the St. Elizabeth area where Country Sign is used by many hearing people, reportedly very well. Deaf people indicate that hearing people are more accustomed to deaf people signing in larger cities, such as Kingston, than in more rural and remote areas.

The choice of whether to use JSL, ASL, or Signed English seems to depend on a person's social network and particular social engagement. Although JSL is prestigious in the community, all three sign varieties may be used interchangeably, if understood by conversation participants.

6 Deaf domains

This section describes specific deaf domains that affect the sociolinguistic situation of the Jamaican deaf community and their use of sign language, including deaf education, deaf organizations, clubs and gatherings, religious meetings, and social access for the deaf community. This information was gathered primarily through background research, PO, and SLQs.

6.1 Deaf education

Deaf schools tend to be the primary location for the development and acquisition of sign language by deaf individuals around the world and so it is dealt with in detail in this report. In Jamaica, free primary education is compulsory for all children aged 6 to 11 but attendance can be as low as 50% in rural areas where children may stay home to help with housework and avoid school fees (Bureau of Democracy,

Human Rights, and Labor 2007). More than 70% of children from ages 12 to 16 attend secondary school and most complete their secondary education (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor 2007). However, of this 70%, only 0.5% complete post-secondary education (UNESCO Development 2004 and Wilson 2001).

The Jamaican Ministry of Education has shown a commitment to education for people with disabilities. As a result of the 1974 declaration by the government that handicapped children have equal rights to education and other services (Robinson 1982), a Special Education Unit focuses on schools for the blind, deaf, and mentally handicapped. Much still remains to be done in special education, especially in rural areas, and the government is considering sending some special education staff into the rural areas and developing a legislative policy to meet the needs of the Special Education Unit (Deaf Today Disabled 2004). Teachers for the deaf can be trained at Mico Teachers' College or the University of the West Indies (UWI). The Ministry of Education provides annual scholarships for teachers training at the UWI and the Netherlands government has been assisting the training at the Mico College since 1977.

There are 14 deaf schools and education programs across Jamaica. Some deaf students may be integrated into hearing classrooms instead of being placed in a deaf educational center (Thompson 2009 and Bent 2009). See table 3 for a description of school location, name, year founded, and number of students in each school.

Table 3. Overview of deaf educational programs in Jamaica

Location	Name of School	Year Founded	Number of Students
Kingston	JAD - Lister Mair/Gilby High School for the Deaf	1966	85
Kingston	JAD - Danny Williams School for the Deaf	1970	60–70
Kingston	JAD - Preschool	1977	Less than 20
Kingston	JAD - Continuing Education Skills Training Programme	1977	68
Kingston	JAD - Excelsior Unit for the Deaf	1968	Less than 10
Kingston	CCCD - Kingston	1994	74
Brown's Town	JAD - St. Christopher's School for the Deaf	1938	41
Mandeville	CCCD - Knockpatrick	1958	135
Mandeville	CCCD - Jamaican Deaf Village	1984	15
May Pen	JAD - May Pen Unit for the Deaf	1977	60
Montego Bay	CCCD - Montego Bay	1990	56
Montego Bay	Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf	1990s	33
Port Antonio	JAD - Port Antonio Unit for the Deaf	1980	8–9
St. Elizabeth	Maranatha School for the Deaf	1975	30

Sign language use in these schools varies, depending on their choice of JSL, ASL, Signed English, or a mixture of all three. Some schools promote a Total Communication (TC) philosophy in the classroom, encouraging any language or communication method that best fits each student's needs and often resulting in teachers who use and encourage the use of simultaneous communication, both signing and speaking at the same time. Many teachers do not know any sign language before having to teach in deaf classrooms, leading to on-site invention of new signs and teaching with signing skills that are not yet fully developed. Deaf students indicate that they prefer to have a fluent deaf-signing teacher so that they can be

actively involved in the classroom. Most administrators at Jamaican deaf schools express a desire to move toward the increased use of JSL in the classroom.

Deaf people from rural locations often move to cities with deaf schools; about 21% of deaf students in Kingston board at school (Northcastle 2009). Between 2003 and 2006, the government allotted $100,000 Jamaican (about $1,140 USD) annually for the maintenance and repair of deaf school facilities (Ministry of Finance 2009). Volunteer Abroad (2009) reports that deaf students who graduate from secondary school usually have less than a fifth-grade reading level. Because most deaf students leave school between age 14 and 16, few complete secondary school and, as a result, few deaf people have professional employment (Delgado 1995).

Although deaf Jamaicans face many obstacles in accessing university education, some have had the opportunity to study at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. and Harvest Deaf Bible College in Georgia. The CASS organization, which is supported by the USA government and Georgetown University, focuses on rural educational development in Central America and the Caribbean, including Jamaica. It provides two-year scholarships for deaf students to pursue advanced education in computer information systems, business, and desktop publishing and provides support for the recipients to find employment in their home countries. It also offers support to hearing people who want to train to become interpreters. CASS graduates usually become leaders in their deaf associations and over 90% are employed and/or continue their studies in their home countries (Disability World 2002); some Jamaicans have taken advantage of this opportunity.

6.1.1 Jamaican Association for the Deaf Schools

Jamaican Association for the Deaf schools play a significant role in Jamaican deaf education. JAD administers seven schools and one continuing-education vocational program, all of which are related to the Ministry of Education. In addition, they are working in cooperation with the Ministry of education to develop a deaf curriculum for grades 1–6.

There are five JAD-affiliated schools in Kingston, four of which are located in the same area of Hope Estates in the Papine area. Lister Mair/Gilby High School was founded in 1966 and offers training in traditional academic subjects, speech training, religious education, and various types of vocational training. There is a separate class for students who enter school at later ages who have no prior educational experience, which also usually results in low-signing skills. As of March 2009, there were approximately 85 students. The Continuing Education Skills Training Programme, which offers vocational training for deaf adults, is located on the Lister Mair/Gilby High School campus. It offers training in fields such as literacy and mathematics, vocational training, life skills, and deaf studies. Deaf Culture Facilitators (DCFs) deaf-culture specialists who support deaf education in Jamaica) associated with JAD were encouraged to take evening classes here to prepare them to take further vocational training at Mico Teacher College (JAD 2009 and UNESCO Jamaica 2000). This program is sponsored by the national HEART Trust/NTA agency and is often referred to as the "Heart School" (Anderson 2009).

Danny Williams School for the Deaf, founded in 1970, is located across the road from Lister Mair/Gilby High School. It is a primary school with 60 to 70 students offering academic training, speech and auditory training, and a 4-H club (Wilson 2001). As of 2007, there were two hearing teachers and two deaf employees at the school (USAID 2007). A JAD preschool is located in the same complex as the Danny Williams School. The first stage of JAD preschool program is training parents to better teach their children at home and also focus on kindergarten-related activities and speech training. In 2009, there were approximately 20 students. There is a special integrated classroom where deaf children and hearing children of deaf adults (CODAs) attend preschool together. The Excelsior Unit for the Deaf and the Excelsior Primary School were both integrated primary schools founded in Kingston. Presently, only the

Excelsior Unit is active, with ten students attending as of 2009 (Deaf Today Disabled 2004 and Anderson 2009).

JAD-affiliated deaf schools are also located in May Pen, Brown's Town, and Port Antonio. The May Pen Unit School, also called the Woodside/Clarendon School for the Deaf, was founded in 1977 and is the only deaf school in Jamaica that offers K–12 in a single building (Wilson 2001). St. Christopher's School for the Deaf, in the northern Jamaican city of Brown's Town, is a primary school founded in 1938 as the first residential deaf school in the British West Indies (JAD 2009 and Mathis 1956). Currently, 41 children from ages 3 to 12, preschool through grade six, attend St. Christopher's; it remains the only JAD-administered school that offers residential facilities (Fenton 2009 and Wilson 2001). There are six deaf or signing adults working there as teachers, counselors and staff, and more than 16 additional hearing staff. Port Antonio Unit for the Deaf is located in Drapers in the Portland parish and has less than 10 enrolled students. While the school is affiliated with JAD, it is also run by the Jamaica Association on Mental Retardation (Anderson 2009).

6.1.2 Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf

In June 1958, Canadian missionaries Reverend and Mrs. Ethridge, and deaf American missionary Ms. Montgomery, founded the CCCD campus in Manchester parish with an opening class of eight students. In September 1962, the school moved to its current location in Knockpatrick. In 1990, 7.5 acres of land in the Montego Bay area were donated to CCCD and that school opened on August 29, 1994 with three students. On July 6, 1994, CCCD received the Christian Deaf Fellowship school in Kingston and opened that campus's doors to 15 students in its first year. CCCD is registered with the Jamaican Ministry of Education as an independent school.

CCCD has headquarters in Lewisburg, West Virginia, USA (McDonald 2006) and currently operates three deaf schools: one in the Cassia Park area in Kingston, one in Knockpatrick near Mandeville in Manchester parish, and one in Granville near Montego Bay in St. James parish. CCCD also sponsors Jamaica Deaf Village (JDV) in Shooter's Hill, near Mandeville. Each of these locations offers religious services for their students and staff alongside educational training. CCCD students range in age from five to their early 20s in grade levels from kindergarten to high school and vocational training. Many students at CCCD board at their respective campuses and CCCD is said to have rescued their students from poverty, living on the streets, or being abandoned by families who could not communicate or provide for them (McDonald 2006). The Kingston CCCD campus has 74 students; the two-acre area has a student dorm and apartments for staff. The campus is located in the capital city, where half of the Jamaican deaf population is said to reside (CCCD 2004).

The Knockpatrick campus is currently a residential school with approximately 135 students in grades K–10. The campus is quite extensive with a number of buildings supporting it as a residential facility and vocational training center focusing on professions, such as woodworking, farming, cosmetology, and computer-based private business practices, such as graphic design. There are also speech and language-therapy services at the Knockpatrick campus (Erin 2009). The deaf staff at CCCD Knockpatrick—at least ten people—come from various locations but most are former graduates of CCCD. They work as groundskeepers, computer teachers, teacher aides, and kitchen workers. The Knockpatrick school has its own farm to feed the students and sell coffee to earn money for the school. Grade nine students in Mandeville go into town once a week to gain work experience and some have part-time paid positions. Administrators at CCCD Knockpatrick have expressed interest in being part of JAD's effort to develop a deaf-studies curriculum with the Ministry of Education.

As of Spring 2009, the Montego Bay residential facility and campus had 56 students, ranging from age 4 to 19, grades K–9. All students, except some who live with parents and are close enough to commute, live

on campus. Many students come from the Negril area and St. Thomas parish. The vocational-training program started in the fall of 2008, offering training in art, food preparation, cosmetology, and computer training. Before the vocational training opened, students would move to the Knockpatrick campus after ninth grade for vocational training and to receive their degree. The Montego Bay campus is also starting a project where graduates can get sponsorships to study at colleges in the USA. At the time of our visit, six of the 20 staff members were deaf and worked as teacher assistants, cooks, maintenance staff, and sign language teachers to hearing staff. CCCD has offered sign language classes to parents but attendance has been low as parents report that the travel distance is too far or their work load is too great.

Several CCCD graduates have chosen to work at JDV, a religious residential vocational program for deaf adults (Team Effort 2009). In June 1984, CCCD obtained 100 acres of land in a rural area 20 minutes from Mandeville. Here, they built JDV with a campus church, factory, apartments, and small houses. It was not until July 2002 that the first residents moved in and the first steam-bent wooden rocking chair was made in JDV's factory. Any deaf person can choose to live indefinitely at JDV, if they follow established JDV rules. Rent to stay in the multi-story apartments at JDV is on a sliding scale, depending on the income level of each resident. There are currently 10 to 15 residents, including singles, couples, and families with children. Residents work in a variety of jobs, including but not limited to carpentry, baking, welding, farming, and sewing. Produce from JDV's garden is sold or used to feed foreign volunteer work teams.

There is extensive contact between people from the USA and CCCD students and staff. Along with financial and staff support from the United States, CCCD has a performing-art-team of deaf Jamaican CCCD students called "Hands in Praise" (formerly the "Gospel Team") that travel to various churches, schools, and colleges, including two annual trips to the USA. The teams, which were first established in 1982, focus on signing songs, sharing testimonies and performing dramas, mimes, and dances to raise money for the schools (Wilson 2005).

6.1.3 Other deaf schools

There are two other deaf schools in addition to those operated by JAD and CCCD. The Maranatha School for the Deaf was founded and built in 1975 by the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions (Wilson 2001), transferred to the Jamaican Mennonite Church in 1979, and funded by a number of organizations, including both these and the Mennonite Central Committee. As a result of these funding sources, Jamaicans provide less than 10% of the school's costs. Currently, the Maranatha School is a residential/day school with approximately 30 children, ranging from 3 to 18 years old, grades kindergarten through grade four. Religious teaching is part of the curriculum; regular subjects, including computer instruction are provided (Goshen 2008) and vocational training in arts, crafts, woodworking, gardening, and construction are also available (Wilson 2001). The school is located in St. Elizabeth; as of 2005, two of the six teachers were deaf and the teacher assistant at the school was also deaf (Wilson 2005).

The JCSD is located in the farming community of Eden, near Montego Bay. The American Ministries to the Deaf founded JCSD in the 1990s and continues to partner closely with them. Most of the funding for JCSD comes from the USA, with some from within Jamaica. JCSD is a residential school for both deaf and handicapped children, aged two through 18, and currently has an enrollment of 33 students in grades K–9. Half of the students who board at the school stay at campus five days a week and return home for the weekends, while the others only return home during school breaks. Due to the school's remote location, most of the 19 staff members—including four deaf staff—also live on campus during the school week and go home on the weekends (Grace Outreach International 2009). Students at JCSD learn a variety of traditional and religious subjects. Older students, in grade eight and above, have access to computer training and a work-experience program that takes them off-campus to learn skills such as

construction, hotel cleaning, and dressmaking. Many students are involved in extra-curricular activities such as community service activities, dance and science clubs, and an annual spelling bee that included 12 different schools as of 2009.

6.2 Jamaican Association for the Deaf

JAD is the national association for the deaf. It was established in 1938 by Frederick Gilby, a 72-year old Church of England minister born to deaf parents, with an initial focus on deaf education (JAD 2009). With the assistance of the Anglican Diocese Board, Gilby started several initiatives serving the deaf community and a school for 15 students between the ages of 8 and 15 in Kingston (Robinson 1982). Today, JAD works with the Ministry of Education and is a Non-Government Organization (NGO) seeking to provide education and support services for the deaf community (Doelman 2008). The government provides 70% of the funding for JAD-operated schools and other support comes from organizations outside of Jamaica, such as USAID and the Alcoa Foundation (Wilson 2005 and Alcoa 2005). JAD serves approximately 4,000 people related to the deaf community per year and, between 1939 and around 1980, worked with approximately 20,000 deaf people (Robinson 1982). Within JAD is J-DEAF, a small deaf-advocacy organization and support group of JAD teacher aides.

JAD is involved in a wide range of initiatives and activities supporting the Jamaican deaf community. They have support service branches that include a hearing assessment clinic, counseling and family guidance, hearing enhancement and protection, educational assessment and placement, integration support for deaf people into hearing situations (such as hearing schools), and sign language and deaf-culture training for hearing people (Beecken 2002 and Fenton 2009). JAD forms strategic plans every few years and JAD's strategy for 2005–2009 had three main goals:

1. To improve literacy among deaf individuals through the development of better policies, standards, resources, and capacity building within educational programs for teachers, parents, and the deaf community.

2. To increase access for deaf people to health and social-support services by enhancing service providers and interpreting services.

3. To advance the quality of hearing-assessment services by providing better capacity and customer service (JAD 2005).

Currently, all administrators are hearing but a number of deaf staff work for JAD, including several computer technicians, educators, cleaning staff, and Deaf Cultural Facilitators (DCFs). There are currently 27 DCFs who have the primary role of leading the Jamaican deaf community in deaf schools and through JAD (Kennewell 2009). Most are in their 20s; approximately one-third of them were supported by USAID to participate in the Uplifting Adolescents Project, an initiative that supported at-risk youth (Wilson 2005). DCFs played a pivotal role in addressing the low level of educational achievement and choices in available educational opportunities, lack of visibility of deaf people in wider society, and lack of assertiveness of the deaf community in agitating for advancement, by developing the Youth Theatre Workshop. This after-school program involved at-risk students in acting and developed their literacy and critical thinking skills through writing drama and exposed them to various social topics through drama themes. In May 1999, there were 194 youth involved, mostly from Kingston with some from May Pen. Thirty-seven percent of the youth came from the lowest socioeconomic and most-violent areas of Kingston (JAD 2001 and JAD 2009).

In 1999, JAD declared that it would support bilingual education and has been working on implementing this approach in their schools. JAD hopes that they will achieve bilingual and bicultural education throughout the deaf educational system in Jamaica as they work with the Ministry of Education for a

stronger deaf-friendly curriculum. The Peace Corps has worked with JAD to provide enhanced translation training and curriculum development (Peace Corps 2009). Several books with short biographies of key members of the Jamaican deaf community were created in 2003 and 2005 with the assistance of the Peace Corps. This series was entitled "I'm Deaf Too," two deaf computer technicians from JAD created an accompanying DVD.

6.3 Deaf religious services

In addition to the services provided at some of the deaf schools, there are three known Protestant deaf churches in Jamaica, a strong Jehovah's Witnesses presence, and several hearing churches that provide interpreters (Kennewell 2009 and Bent 2009). Table 4 lists known churches and outreaches serving the Jamaican deaf community. According to one source, as many as 800 deaf people attend religious services.

Table 4. Churches and outreaches serving the deaf community in Jamaica

Location	Church/Ministry Name
St. Elizabeth	Deaf Bible Church
Mandeville	New Life Deaf Church
Kingston	Calabar Baptist Deaf Church
Various	Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Halls
Various	Interpreted Church Services

The Calabar Baptist Deaf Church has met at the Calabar High School in the Kingston area for over 10 years. JDV in Mandeville has its own church: New Life Church (sometimes called the JDV church). Damian Campbell, the only deaf pastor in Jamaica with a post-secondary degree (having completed studies at a seminary in the USA) leads this church in JSL and ASL. CCCD also hosts an annual religious deaf camp in the summer, held on different Caribbean islands every year. Deaf people from the USA, Jamaica, Grenada, Antigua, and St. Vincent attend. The Deaf Bible Church, founded in the early 1980's by the American Ministries to the Deaf, is located in Top Hill in St. Elizabeth. The current deaf teaching pastor, Pauline Bent, reportedly uses both JSL and Country Sign in services.

The Jehovah's Witnesses are very active in their outreach to the Jamaican deaf community. In the Kingston area, the Jehovah's Witnesses have held services and meetings for the last two years. This year, they meet on Sunday evenings in a Kingdom Hall in Portmore. About half of this congregation is deaf and the other half is hearing, but the services are held entirely in sign language. Some meetings have as many as 100 attending and at some special deaf events, as many as 150. Services are very visually accessible and deaf friendly, using ASL materials (e.g. ASL Bible translation on DVD) from the USA and JSL in interpreted teaching and interactive discussions. The Jehovah's Witnesses eagerly teach hearing people to sign and be involved in the deaf community. Some deaf Jamaicans indicate that they have a unique sign variety that is distinct to their social network and not necessarily representative of the wider Jamaican deaf community's JSL. There are nine known Jehovah's Witness deaf ministries, including ones in Montego Bay, St. Elizabeth, Ocho Rios, and in the Brown's Town area.

Deaf people also attend hearing congregations, both those with and others without sign language interpreters (Dawes 2004). These congregations include the New Testament Church near Calabar, a Seventh Day Adventist church in Kingston, a Missionary Church in Portmore, and Rosemont Missionary Church in Montego Bay.

6.4 Informal social gatherings

Deaf Jamaicans are highly mobile and interact with other deaf communities all over the island, only limited by resources to travel and their preferred social network and perceptions of other people. The Jamaican deaf community enjoys competing in sporting events, including cricket matches throughout Jamaica (JAD 2009) and a national deaf dance competition (Kennewell 2009). Deaf people often interact with each other at church, work, meetings, parties, social gatherings, soccer matches, and other special events, such as annual revivals and island-wide deaf social gatherings. The Jamaican deaf community also has a lot of interaction with people from other countries. Out of ten SLQ participants, seven said they had interacted with deaf people from foreign countries, including people from the USA (especially New York), Canada, Australia, England, and other Caribbean islands, such as the Cayman Islands, Grenada, St. Vincent, Barbados, and Trinidad.

According to our deaf participants, Kingston has the largest deaf community, followed by Mandeville, Montego Bay, and the Country Sign deaf community in St. Elizabeth. Table 5 lists various gatherings for the deaf community in Jamaica, organized by city. Unlike the associations, these clubs and gatherings have no link to the government and are very informal.

Table 5. Clubs and gatherings for the Jamaican deaf community

City	Sites
Kingston and surrounding areas	Kingston Deaf Club Adult Deaf Club Half Way Tree Dominoes gathering in Portmore
Mandeville	Thursday Night Deaf Fellowship
Montego Bay	Social Gatherings near Island Grill
St. Elizabeth Parish	Junction Town Center A local deaf leader's home

Kingston has several deaf clubs and gatherings. The Kingston Deaf Club (KDC) (also called the Uptown Deaf Club, Calabar Deaf Club, and formerly the Kingston Deaf Fellowship) is currently being revived after it was shut down two years ago (Kennewell 2009 and Wilson 2005). A club announcement indicated that over 100 deaf people attended a recent meeting (DeafReunion 2009). Club members plan community outings, such as going to the beach and movies, sports activities, playing dominoes, weekly soccer matches, drama groups, and end-of-year parties (JAD 2005). Also in Kingston, the Adult Deaf Club (informally called the Downtown Deaf Club) meets on weekend evenings near the Half Way Tree intersection in downtown Kingston. There appears to be distinct social networks based on education level of the members and, at the time of our visit, there were 15–20 deaf people in each of the 3–4 distinct groups. In Portmore, in the greater Kingston area, many people gather at one deaf family's residence to play dominoes on Saturday nights. SLQ participants also indicated deaf people in Kingston socialize at JAD's offices, JAD schools, and other places in the greater Kingston area, such as Papine, New Kingston, and Spanish Town.

Mandeville's deaf social events are primarily organized by the CCCD Knockpatrick deaf leaders. On Thursday evenings, there is a deaf gathering at the Mandeville Baptist Church from 6:30 to 9 pm. It serves both as a Christian fellowship and a place to learn the latest community news. At the time of our visit, approximately 25 deaf people of all ages attended. Deaf people may also interact informally at the CCCD Knockpatrick campus, outside of the Mandeville Burger King, and in soccer competitions.

Montego Bay hosts a meeting of deaf adults on weekend evenings around the corner from the Island Grill in town (Thompson 2009). A higher percentage of males than females attend these meetings; a total of approximately 20 young and middle-aged deaf people attended the night we visited. Deaf people from St. Elizabeth parish congregate around the center of town in Junction in the evenings. Ten people were present the two nights we visited the downtown area near the taxi stop. Deaf people also congregate at a local deaf leader's house, outside of Junction, and near the Maranatha School for the Deaf.

7 Social access

This section covers employment opportunities, interpreter services, technology, HIV/AIDS education, and additional access opportunities for deaf Jamaicans. Overall, questionnaire respondents indicated that, in terms of services and access, Kingston offers the most resources for deaf people in Jamaica.

7.1 Employment opportunities

As previously stated, more than half of the deaf community in Jamaica lives in poverty. Many are unemployed and have difficulty finding jobs, due to lack of communication access, necessary qualifications, and the necessary social networks typically needed to find work in Jamaica. According to Gayle (2005), less than 2% of people in the deaf community in Jamaica have a well-paying job.

In response to this issue, JAD has a Social Services department that addresses the issues of employment, vocational training, and job counseling (Goshen 2007). Due to JAD's influence and increase of opportunities as compared to other places in Jamaica, many deaf people move to Kingston to seek work. Through the years, deaf people have served in various types of employment, including positions in manual labor, agriculture, stores, clerical-related tourism and hospitality, art, religious ministries, and education (Olson 1995 and Campbell and Campbell 2003). In areas where there are deaf schools, such as Brown's Town and Mandeville, deaf people report that it is difficult to find jobs outside of the educational centers, although some deaf people have started their own businesses.

7.2 Interpreter services

There is only one interpreter in Jamaica that deaf people report as being qualified (because she pursued training in the USA), although she currently works full-time as a counselor and not an interpreter. Others who have some experience interpreting already have full-time job commitments. Deaf questionnaire participants indicate that while some interpreters sign very well, others do not, and many hearing signers are not involved in the deaf community. People in Jamaica who sign but are not qualified to be interpreters are usually called "signers" or "communication assistants." JAD has employed a full-time "Communication Aide" for JAD-related activities to facilitate communication which, for the most part, entails interpreting when needed. The UWI has an interpreting training program that is in its early stages of development (Kennewell 2009) and there is a deaf tutor at the UWI who teaches JSL to a handful of hearing students. Unfortunately, when people learn how to sign, their workplaces may take advantage of their skills without providing any financial compensation for their additional work. Some venues are beginning to provide interpreters, such as the Little Theatre in St. Andrew, and the deaf community hopes to see more of this in the future (Reid 2003).

Questionnaire participants indicate that, of interpreters available in Jamaica, most are found in Kingston; some communities with significant deaf populations only have one interpreter. In addition to the interpreter-training program at UWI, the Jehovah's Witnesses are training and providing interpreters in a number of the communities, some interpreters may teach themselves or interact with the deaf community to learn how to interpret, and others are learning from JAD, CCCD, or in other countries. Interpreters work at a variety of places including schools, courts, doctor's offices and hospitals, job interviews, and churches, to name a few. In some cases, deaf people bring friends to interpret for their appointments.

The Constitution of Jamaica states that "Every person who is charged with a criminal offence shall be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, in a language which he understands, of the nature of the offence charged" (Deaf Today Signs 2005). People in the court system, social workers, and Department of Correctional Services officers have learned sign language related to affairs of the court so that the law may be upheld to include sign language. This is a change from previous practices when the only option was for JAD to be called to court to facilitate communication. The justice system appears to be increasingly dedicated to providing sign language interpreters in court (Deaf Today Signs 2005).

7.3 Communication technology

The telecommunications company Cable and Wireless donated 25 teletypewriter (TTY) phones that were installed all over the island and were used for emergency services from 2000 to 2005. However, most of those phones are currently out of service, possibly due to maintenance issues. Many deaf people in the community use text messaging, but more TTY devices are still needed (Neaves 2005). Independent Living Jamaica (2006) offers TTYs, amplified devices, and alerting devices to the deaf community. Some deaf people on the island have mobile devices imported from America and are familiar with American phone companies; there is one videophone in Portmore. While virtually all deaf people have access to DVD players, fewer have easy access to computers.

Deaf people in Jamaica also have access to hearing aids and cochlear implants. Hearing aids are available through different services and organizations, including Capital Hearing Services Limited, Caribbean Hearing Centre, JAD, and Siredan Enterprises Limited (Caribbean Online 2008). Their prices are expensive, ranging from 17,000 to 90,000 Jamaican dollars each (about 190 to 1,010 USD) (Ustanny 2004). However, in 2005, the Starkey Hearing Foundation, with the assistance of JAD, provided hearing screening and the fitting of 1,070 hearing aids for 550 people, mostly children and infants (JAD 2009). The first cochlear implant surgery in the English-speaking Caribbean was done at Kingston Public Hospital on December 3, 2005. This surgery was done in collaboration with the Caribbean Hearing Health Foundation (CHHF) and Johns Hopkins University. The CHHF was established in 2005 by JAD and the Caribbean Association of Otorhinolaryngologists with several goals, such as providing audiology services, cochlear implants, early detection within the first six months of life, treatment options, early intervention programs promoting spoken language, literacy, mainstream education, and the training of auditory/verbal therapists (Williams 2005 and Francis 2009).

7.4 Driving privileges

Since 1981, the Jamaican deaf community has been lobbying for the right to get driver licenses, which the 1938 Road Traffic Act had made illegal. The first Jamaican deaf person to have a driver license obtained it in the United States and was able to transfer it to Jamaica. In January 2002 and March 2003, public protests led by deaf activists expressed community desires for driver licenses (JAD 2005a). However, by the beginning of 2004, only 20 deaf people in Jamaica had driver licenses and only one of those was obtained within Jamaica. After a public forum discussion of the issues in February 2004 (Lim 2004), the Jamaican government began work on draft regulations to allow deaf people to drive (Jamaica Observer 2004). In July 2008, the State Minister for Labour and Social Security announced that the current administration was ready to permit deaf people to obtain driver licenses.

In March 2009, deaf people were finally allowed to get driver licenses, news that quickly spread through the media. In preparation for this change, 25 inspectors from the Island Traffic Authority received sign language training (Jamaica Gleaner 2008). This included 120 hours of training in communication skills and deaf culture awareness in spring 2009 from JAD (Fenton 2009). CCCD is planning to offer new driver-training opportunities but deaf people can also learn to drive by going to a hearing school or learning from a friend above the age of 18. There is still ongoing debate about whether deaf people will need to be identified as "deaf" on their driver licenses and/or put a sign in their car's back window labeled

"HIP" (Hearing-Impaired Person). Some deaf people do not want the "HIP" sign on their cars because of the possibility that they may become targets for crimes that take advantage of their not being able to hear; but most are willing to accept it because they have finally obtained the right to drive.

7.5 HIV/AIDS education

Research done by the JCPD and the Ministry of Health shows that deaf females in Jamaica are especially vulnerable to rape, battery, incest, and physical abuse. Some hearing men believe sexually transmitted diseases can be cured by sleeping with a virgin with a disability (4 Hearing Loss 2006). According to Duff-Brown (2005), sexual abuse, multiple sexual partners, and rape within marriage are common within the Jamaican deaf community. HIV information is often not accessible to the deaf community because many deaf people do not have enough English literacy to access available materials and little health and reproductive education is offered in deaf schools. Some deaf people are not aware that HIV even exists (Williams 2007).

According to Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (2002), an HIV/AIDS initiative was started at the turn of the century that included meetings held in public parks, rap sessions related to AIDS/STDs performed at deaf club gatherings, and public service announcements broadcasted on the radio and television. In 2006, JCPD also launched an HIV/AIDS Prevention Program for Deaf Women with the long-term goal of sharing information so deaf females can better protect themselves. Workshops were held throughout the island that provided deaf women with survival skills, safe-sex advice, self-defense techniques, and vocational skills for decreasing vulnerability based on lack of income (Kelly 2006b). This HIV/AIDS program also used text messages to raise awareness and made sure public health information on television had sign language interpretation (UNAIDS 2008). JCPD's program started with 35 deaf females; by November 2006, the program had reached over 1,000 women (Kelly 2006a). As a result of this program, deaf men were also interested in having a similar program for themselves; therefore, a national workshop was held that brought both deaf men and women together to be trained in HIV/AIDS awareness throughout the year (UNAIDS 2008).

8 What does the Jamaican deaf community want?

The current situation of the Jamaican deaf community is looking positive; movement toward bilingual and bicultural education across the island, continued activities and initiatives of JAD, establishment of an interpreter-training program, growing deaf religious and social engagements, improving social access, and positive attitudes toward the use of sign language all point toward a deaf community that is growing stronger. However, there are still aspects of their lives and community that the deaf community is targeting for development. This section presents those needs and desires as described by the Jamaican deaf community.

Questionnaire participants, participant observation, and previous research indicate that the Jamaican deaf community is keenly interested in the following community-development needs:

- Stronger deaf-led local and national organizations and an increase of deaf socializing opportunities
- Government support for social equality and legal aid
- Better and more interpreter-training programs, professionalism, and educational materials
- Deaf education and multilingual education training for teachers
- Better and more advanced deaf-educational opportunities, vocational training, aid for deaf people seeking employment, and adult education (such as HIV awareness and parenting skills)
- Higher English literacy
- Books and workshops to teach sign language and deaf culture to hearing people

- Deaf churches and pastors
- Better technological access, such as video and technical services, closed captioning on TV, acquisition of TTYs, computers, and relay/video relay/videophone services (Wilson 2005)

They also indicated a need to have the following language materials:

- JSL dictionary
- JSL literature through books and DVDs
- JSL Bible
- English books translated into JSL
- Interpreter manuals to improve the process of certifying interpreters
- Deaf Studies curriculum that is deaf-specific with less hearing bias (currently in progress)
- Other educational materials for the deaf community (Wilson 2005)

Deaf participants indicate that these materials would be incorporated and used in a variety of situations, including at school and home, deaf organizations and institutions, by individuals who struggle with English literacy, for personal growth, encouraging parents to learn sign language, counseling, and for sign language documentation.

9 Conclusion

The Jamaican deaf community has experienced a broadening of their access and rights in recent years. They have heightened telecommunication access, improved HIV/AIDS awareness programs, and are now able to obtain Jamaican driver licenses. They remain motivated in fostering the development of their community, especially in the areas of sign language dictionary development, improved education, and interpreter services. The situation is hopeful as the Jamaican deaf community exercises its agency in working toward achieving the linguistic recognition and social access they desire.

JSL, Country Sign, ASL, and Signed English are all currently used in the Jamaican deaf community by individuals with different skill levels and in varying domains. Although JSL has historical ties to both BSL and ASL, it is regarded by the Jamaican deaf community to be a unique language to Jamaica. JSL seems predominantly to be the heart language of the Jamaican deaf community and, because of the high mobility in the deaf community, appears to be fairly standardized. In comparison, ASL and Signed English seem to be lingua francas used by deaf Jamaicans with hearing Jamaicans and the large influx of ASL users from the USA. Although JSL is held to be the language of the Jamaican deaf community, there does not seem to be strong attitudes against the use of either ASL or Signed English and materials from the USA are in use throughout the island.

Because most deaf Jamaicans learn sign language through school, it is significant to the changing sociolinguistic situation that both JAD and CCCD, who supervise the majority of the deaf schools, are partnering together with the Ministry of Education to implement bilingual and bicultural education in the classroom. The increased use of JSL materials in the deaf schools make it highly probable that the use of JSL will increase throughout all facets of Jamaican deaf-community life. To the extent that JSL materials are developed and distributed throughout the hearing community, it is also likely that the use of ASL and Signed English may decrease in coming decades. In addition, because Maranatha School in St. Elizabeth is using JSL instead of Country Sign and the community is unconcerned with keeping Country Sign alive, it is likely that Country Sign will become extinct in this century. It is imperative that Country Sign be documented now if the unique cultural and linguistic information held in this unique Jamaican deaf community is to be retained.

Appendix A. Deaf education institutions

Table 4 provides an overview of deaf educational institutions (both JAD-administered and religious).

Table 4. Deaf education institutions

Location	Institution Name	Institution Details
Kingston	Lister Mair/Gilby High School for the Deaf	Founded in 1966; 85 students; offers academic and vocational training; provides education for students entering school at later ages; JAD schools are targeting for JSL use in the classrooms
Kingston	Danny Williams School for the Deaf	Founded in 1970; 50 to 70 students; offers academic training, auditory training, speech therapy, lip reading, and a 4-H club
Kingston	JAD Preschool	Fewer than 20 students; focuses on training parents to teach children at home; kindergarten-related activities; speech training
Kingston	Excelsior Unit for the Deaf	Less than 10 students; primary school; has a satellite school
Kingston	JAD Continuing Education Skills Training Programme	Sponsored through the HEART Trust and referred to as the "Heart School;" offers classes such as literacy, numeracy, vocational training, bindery workshops, and teacher training
Kingston	CCCD Kingston	Founded in 1994; 74 students; the two-acre area has living areas for students and staff
Brown's Town	St Christopher's School for the Deaf	Founded in 1938; 41 students; primary school and first residential school in the British West Indies
Mandeville	Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf (CCCD) Knockpatrick	Founded in June 1958; 135 students; Kindergarten to Grade 9 or 10; residential school with vocational program; all CCCD schools use total communication methods
May Pen	May Pen Unit for the Deaf (Woodside/ Clarendon School for the Deaf)	Founded in 1977; 60 students; only K–12 deaf school within one building; offers vocational training
Montego Bay	CCCD Montego Bay	Founded in 1990; 56 students; grades 1 to 9; residential school with new vocational-training program
Montego Bay	Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf	Founded in the 1990's; 33 students from ages 2 to 18; residential school for both deaf and handicapped children; academic subjects, computer training, work experience, and extra-curricular activities; uses JSL
Port Antonio	Port Antonio Unit for the Deaf	8–9 students registered, less actually attend classes
St. Elizabeth Parish	Maranatha School for the Deaf	Founded in 1975; about 30 children; primary school; computer instruction and vocational training offered; uses JSL

Appendix B. Sociolinguistic questionnaire

Questionnaire templates were formed in Microsoft Word and include both open and closed questions. Table 5 contains the list of questions asked. Questions 1–7 examined the SLQ participant's metadata (personal background information). Questions 8–18 collected basic information regarding the participant's perception of the social situation of the deaf community. These questions could be used with either hearing or deaf people. Questions 19–39 gathered information about the participant's language use and attitudes. The SLQ also included a brief explanation of the research, gave an opportunity for the participant to show consent for being involved in the project, and showed which level of consent the participant was willing to give for the use of any data they provided.

Table 5. Sociolinguistic questionnaire

Participant metadata
1. Approximately how old are you now?
2. Do you have any deaf family members? If so, who?
3. Where do you currently live?
4. How many years of education have you completed?
5. Please name the school(s) you have attended.
6. Where do you interact with deaf people?
7. At what age did you first start signing? Where and instructed by whom? Name:
Deaf services and meeting places
8. List associations and organizations serving deaf people in your area, indicating their role:
9. Do deaf people attend religious services? If no, explain why not. If yes, please answer the following: What services do they attend? Why do deaf people attend services? What language(s) does the service use? How many deaf people attend these services?
10. Do deaf people meet at any other places than you listed above? How often and with what activities?
11. Please list the deaf schools in your area. How many years of education do these schools offer students? Please identify the communication philosophy of each school (oral, bilingual, TC, etc.).
12. Are there interpreters available in your area? If so, please answer the following: How many? How are they trained? Where do they work? How many of these would you consider to be skilled interpreters?
13. Please list any published materials about the sign language in your area.
14. Do deaf people in your community interact with deaf people from other places in Jamaica? If so, please answer the following: Which other communities? Where and why do they meet?
15. Have deaf people here interacted with deaf people from other countries? If so, which countries?
16. What type of jobs do most deaf people have in Jamaica?
17. Do most deaf people in your area have a DVD player and/or computer in their house?
18. Please list the leaders, hearing or deaf, of your local deaf community.
Language use and attitudes
19. Where do deaf people learn sign language in your community?
20. How many deaf people sign in your community? How well do they sign?
21. How many hearing people use sign language in your community? How well do they sign?
22. Do deaf people sign the same with hearing people as they do with each other? If no, how do deaf people sign differently?
23. Do you interact more with deaf or hearing people? Why?

24. Do deaf parents sign with their hearing children?
25. Do hearing parents sign with their deaf children?
26. How do deaf people feel when signing in public?
27. Are hearing people supportive of the deaf community? Explain your answer.
28. Do all deaf people in Jamaica sign the same? If no, what factors lead to different signing?
29. Do you want everyone in Jamaica to sign the same? Explain your answer.
30. What is the name of the sign language in your area?
31. Is your sign language like the sign language of any other country? If yes, which one(s)?
32. Do you think that it is better for deaf people to use sign language or spoken language? Explain your answer.
33. How well do you read and write English?
34. What type of language materials (e.g. Bible, dictionary, interpreter training manual, sign literature, etc.) do you want to be developed? How and where would you use them?
35. What does your deaf community need most to succeed in life?

Comparisons

36. When choosing a president in your deaf association/organization, how would you rank the importance of the following five characteristics (deaf, sign well, able to speak, able to read/write, well educated)?
37. Best place (city or country) for deaf people to live in (most services, education, support, etc.).
38. Place with sign language that is the easiest to understand.
39. Place with the most beautiful sign language.

Additional notes:

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