School-to-Work Transition of the Deaf in Jamaica

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The Planning Institute of Jamaica

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List of Acronyms

AF	Abilities Foundation
CCDC	Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
DBJ	Development Bank of Jamaica
GOJ	Government of Jamaica
GSAT	Grade Six Achievement Test
GFLT	Grade Four Literacy Test
HEART	Human Employment and Resource Training
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicap
ICRPD	International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
JAD	Jamaica Association for the Deaf
JCPD	Jamaica Council for Persons with Disability
JEF	Jamaica Employers' Federation
JEEP	Jamaica Emergency Employment
JSL	Jamaican Sign Language
LMG	Lister Mair Gilby School for the Deaf
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MOE	Ministry of Education
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NMLS	Norman Manley Law School
PATH	Programme for Advancement through Health and Education
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PWD	Persons with Disability
RIT	Rochester Institute of Technology
SREOPD	The Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for the Disabled
UTech	University of Technology
UWI	University of the West Indies
WFD	World Federation of the Deaf
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

The guiding principles to which Jamaica subscribes in relation to the rights of persons with disabilities are outlined in the International Convention (ICRPD), and the country's own Disabilities Act (2014). These instruments establish the rights of persons with disabilities to education and training, health care, and access to employment opportunities on an equal footing as all other persons in the society. While the Convention is more international and generalized in outlook, the Act makes specific provisions for the legal protection of persons with disabilities at the workplace.

In a country of approximately 2.7 million people, Jamaica's Deaf population is currently estimated at 54 000. The Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD) Hearing Services conducts hearing screenings and diagnostic assessments. Data for 2012–2014 indicated that 1 213 adults and 519 children were diagnosed with hearing loss, and 67.0 per cent of this number experienced mild to moderate loss, while the other 33.0 per cent experienced losses in the severe to profound range.

Study Objectives and Methodology

Against the problem of low school-to-work transition of the Deaf, the TOR sets out the study objectives as:

i. To provide an evidence base for appropriate and effective interventions in policy and practice to support the full enjoyment of the Deaf of the opportunity to earn a living
ii. To improve the quality of life of Deaf citizens in Jamaica, and their school-to work-transition in particular.

A mixed methods approach was taken, which involved:

a) A review of existing literature

b) Collection of secondary data from the Jamaican Ministry of Education (MOE), including the 2014 National Schools' Census
c) Interviews with key informants
d) Two focus group sessions
e) Three case studies
f) A survey of 160 non-agriculture sector employers in the Kingston Metropolitan Area, Mandeville and Montego Bay.

The study design changed over the course of the research as intended approaches were modified in response to fieldwork experiences. Hence, a face-to-face survey of employers was included after attempts at an online survey were unsuccessful.

Disability, Access and Equal Opportunity

The imperative to protect the rights of persons with disabilities is premised on the fact that their rights are not assured in all societies. The World Report on Disabilities (2011) points out that many persons with disabilities do not have equal access to basic services in their societies, as a result, they experience exclusion. Based, therefore, on the principles espoused under the ICRPD, the rights of persons with disabilities are framed as human rights issues. This places an obligation on governments to afford the same rights and opportunities to persons with disabilities as are afforded to all human beings as basic rights.

The concepts and, therefore, the approaches towards addressing the issues faced by persons with disabilities have undergone evolution over time. Coming from an earlier focus on 'natural exclusion' and the diminished ability of the individual (the medical model), later approaches were more centred on the hostility of the physical, social and economic environment within which persons with disabilities must operate.

Persons with disabilities face a number of barriers in the absence of the required special supports. These barriers include inadequate policies and standards, negative attitudes, insufficient services, and absence of data and evidence to respond to their needs (World Report on Disabilities, 2011). The result is that persons with

disabilities face difficulties in health care, education, the labour market, and are more likely to be poor. Supporting data for Jamaica show that in 2010, the level of poverty among persons with disabilities was 23.0 per cent versus 17.0 per cent for those without a disability. Persons with disabilities were also twice as likely to be food poor than those without a disability. Additionally, Jamaicans with disabilities are aware of their educational and skill-set deficiencies and recognize that these presented barriers to their finding optimal employment (Moncrieff, 2015).

Issues affecting the Deaf

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) has identified the following four basic factors necessary to ensure the human rights of the Deaf:

1. Sign language
2. Bi-lingual education
3. Accessibility
4. Interpreting.

These principles are endorsed under Article 24, Sections 1 and 2 of the ICRPD.

In a survey of 93 countries, the "Deaf People and Human Rights" report (2011) found that lack of recognition of sign language, lack of systems for bilingual education, limited availability of sign language interpreting services, and widespread lack of awareness and knowledge about the situation of Deaf people, deprive most Deaf people of access to large sections of society.

The WFD estimates that 80.0 per cent of Deaf people in the world have no access to education, and only 1.0 – 2.0 per cent gets education in sign language (http://wfdeaf.org/human-rights). Limited education attainment confines the Deaf to lower level non-skilled occupations, and undermines their ability to secure their future, leaving many in poverty and increasing vulnerability. However, it remains a challenge in many countries, particularly those in developing societies, where "children with hearing loss and deafness rarely receive any schooling" (WHO).

This is not the case in Jamaica, where, since the 1930's, educating the Deaf has been spearheaded by the non-state sector, with the majority of Deaf education taking place in segregated settings. However, the GOJ has become a major partner in Deaf

education since the 1970s. There are currently 12 specialized education institutions for Deaf children in Jamaica:

- Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf (CCCD) – three schools (Kingston, Mandeville and Montego Bay)
- Maranatha School for the Deaf in St. Elizabeth
- Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf in Montego Bay
- Seven educational programmes operated by the Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD) in Kingston, Clarendon, St. Ann and Portland.

At least three of the schools—Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf, Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf and St. Christopher's (JAD) — offer residential facilities for students. Data from the National School Census for 2014/15 show that 310 students (169 boys and 141 girls) were enrolled in Schools for the Deaf across the island. Despite the geographic spread of the schools, the demand for services outpaces the supply. This results in many children, who are deaf, being separated from their families in order to access schooling and other support services, as these schools are concentrated in a few urban centres.

Although having access to schooling, low literacy and academic performance have been a persistent problem among Deaf students. JAD School statistics (2011) indicate that approximately 75.0 per cent of secondary level graduates do not attain marketable skills by school-leaving age. This is attributed to several factors, including late entry into an appropriate educational programme, weak parental support, and ineffective instructional strategies. It is also compounded by the fact that in Jamaica, not all teachers of the Deaf are fluent in Jamaican Sign Language (JSL), the main teaching tool for the Deaf, although almost 70.0 per cent hold tertiary level teaching credentials. In addition, the Ministry of Education (MOE) does not currently have any specific required qualifications for teachers of the Deaf.

With low levels of English literacy and academic achievement, the Deaf graduate is ill-equipped for the world of work, and often ends up in lower level manual occupations. Over the past five years, approximately 142 Deaf students have

graduated from secondary level institutions. Less than 5.6 per cent of those who graduated within the past five years have continued to tertiary institutions (the majority overseas), and approximately 20.0 per cent or less have gained part-time/full-time employment. This reflects an unemployment rate of 80.0 per cent or more within the Deaf/Hard of Hearing population in Jamaica.

The Deaf face several specific work readiness and transition issues. The low level of education achievement is a major barrier to their successful transition, but, also of importance, are communication barriers and cultural attitudes towards them. These attitudinal and educational concerns are compounded by the lack of any systemic facilitation of the Deaf in either the workplace or hearing post-secondary institutions.

The study found that none of the postsecondary/tertiary institutions in Jamaica made any special provision for the Deaf in the classroom. Deaf students, who have been able to pursue higher education, have done so at great personal expense, and without any structured assistance from their schools. In addition, many are not completely deaf, but are hard of hearing, or experienced post-lingual hearing loss. The JAD recognises this "clear difference between opportunities available to those who are deaf, and those who are hard of hearing" (personal communication, January 16, 2015).

Employers' Perceptions and Workplace Experiences

The survey of employers undertaken for this study presents some insights into the perceptions of employers regarding working with Deaf persons. The data show that employers were open to the idea of hiring the Deaf, even though the majority had never worked with someone who was hearing impaired. There was almost universal agreement (94.0 per cent) that the Deaf should be given the same opportunities as everyone else. However, there seemed to be general uncertainty about what working with the Deaf really meant and employers had questions about the implications for them and their organisations.

Despite the uncertainty, there is evidence that suggests that employers are open to employing the Deaf, and have had positive experiences from having done so. The major concerns about Deaf integration have surrounded issues of communication, the need for hearing staff to learn JSL and concerns about the ability of Deaf employees to effectively integrate and follow instructions.

Recommendations

Among the recommendations flowing from the study are:

i. The educators of the Deaf should apply the principle of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and reconsider the exclusive use of segregated schools for education of students who are deaf

ii. The JCPD should work with the service providers in the sector to design and execute a highly visible behaviour change campaign to reinforce the potential of the Deaf. This campaign will include elements that target both parents and the wider public. The parent-focus aspect should centre around the fact that a productive life is possible even with hearing loss, and information should be provided about the education and livelihood opportunities available to their children

iii. Strengthen the capacity of the JCPD to work with employers to develop inclusive organisations

iv. Led by JCPD, establish Transition Advisory Board comprised of employers as a joint initiative with the JEF/PSOJ. This Board would help to bring awareness to issues affecting the Deaf, and also to educate employers about what it takes to employ the Deaf.

v. The public sector should provide strategic leadership and a clear example on the issue. This should be reflected in a deliberate effort by the GOJ to recruit and train the hearing impaired in all areas of operations for which they can be trained.

1. Introduction

The International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ICRPD) recognises that:

> *disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others* (point "e" at preamble*).*

Essentially, the Convention is establishing that the extent to which persons are considered disabled rests on the ability or preparedness of their environment to meet the special needs of persons who have a physical or mental impairment. Hence, the extent of 'disability' is not determined by the presence of the impairment, but by the extent of the exclusion. As the Salamanca Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994 puts it:

> A change in social perspective is imperative. For far too long, the problems of people with disabilities have been compounded by a disabling society that has focused [on] their impairments rather than their potential (p.7).

The inclusion of the disabled in the mainstream of society, with access to opportunities and services, and the chance to fulfill their potential, is the main objective of advocacy, policies and programmes to support this community. In addition to the ICRPD, governments have enacted legislation to reiterate the rights of the disabled to all the full benefits of citizenship, including the right to education and training, health care, and access to employment opportunities. Jamaica's own Disabilities Act, which was passed in 2014, outlines the obligation of service providers and state services to make every effort to make 'reasonable accommodation' [1] to ensure that the disabled are not covertly or overtly discriminated against in several spheres of national life. The Act speaks to the provision of support for persons with disabilities in helping them access their rights,

[1] Under the ICRPD (article 2), "reasonable accommodation" means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

and establishes an oversight body — The Jamaica Council for Disabilities — which is charged with a range of advisory and advocacy responsibilities to support the full and effective participation of the disabled in society.

2. Study Objectives

The objectives of the current study are:

- to provide an evidence base for appropriate and effective interventions in policy and practice to support the full enjoyment of the Deaf of the opportunity to earn a living,
- to improve the quality of life of Deaf citizens in Jamaica, and their school-to work-transition in particular (TOR). Specifically, the GOJ is seeking to establish an empirical basis on which to "develop appropriate interventions to address the problem of low school-to-work transition of Deaf youth" (ibid).

2.1. The Scope of Work

The Scope of Work (SoW) as outlined by the TOR included the conduct of an appropriate literature review that explores the experience of the Deaf in terms of the issues which affect the education and livelihood opportunities of the Deaf, with specific reference to similar and developed country contexts for comparison purposes. The study was also expected to provide a demographic profile of Deaf students transitioning from secondary and tertiary education levels, and case studies from this cohort to support findings on transition from school to employment, or further training. Other elements of the SoW included:

a) Conduct an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of the offerings in education and training that are available at the secondary and post-secondary (including tertiary) levels of education, accessible to the Deaf in Jamaica

b) Describe the current human resource capacity for the teaching/training of the Deaf at secondary and post-secondary levels

c) Explore the perspectives of training institutions and employers to inclusion of the Deaf.

3. Methods of Data Collection

Given the objectives of the study, and the scope of work, a mixed method data collection approach was employed in its execution. Specifically, the issues in the study were explored via the following methodologies:

a) Desk Literature Review: the TOR requires a literature review that looks at the experiences of the Deaf in education and the labour market (locally and internationally). In fully exploring and elucidating the issues raised by the TOR, specific attention was paid to:

- Issues in educating the Deaf
- Programmes for the education of the Deaf.
- The receptivity and accessibility of the labour market to the Deaf
- Issues that affect labour market participation
- Programmes that focus specifically on the school-to-work transition of the Deaf
- Programmes to promote labour market inclusion of the Deaf.

b) Collection of secondary data: from the Ministry of Education (MoE). Data was collected on the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) achievement levels of students in the schools/programmes catering to the Deaf. Data on teacher qualification was also collected from the 2014 National School census conducted by the Ministry of Education.

c) Key Informant Interviews: these interviews were conducted with:

- Individuals and organisations with responsibility for providing education social services for the Deaf
- Parents of the Deaf
- People who are deaf
- Jamaica Employers' Federation

- Human Resource professionals in organisations that currently employ Deaf persons
- Policymakers in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Planning Institute of Jamaica, and the Ministry of Education

d) **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** two FGDs were held with senior students at the educational institutions for the Deaf. These were held at the main institution that offers secondary education for the Deaf. The secondary level institution was chosen to get the views of the older students who were closer to the transition point. The services of a sign language interpreter were engaged for the sessions.

e) **Case Studies:** with guidance from JAD and other relevant informants, three case studies were completed. These case studies are intended to highlight the issues faced by Deaf young men and women, as well as older adults in the labour force and explore the issues that contribute to their experiences.

f) **Survey of Employers.** a survey was conducted with employers in three urban centres in Jamaica—the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA), Mandeville, and Montego Bay. A survey was conducted of a sample of business within two distinct urban geographic areas. These areas were selected not only for their national spatial importance but also the diversity of their local economy. The areas selected were the Kingston Metropolitan Area (Kingston and St Andrew), Mandeville, and Montego Bay. Economic Sub regions (ESRs) within these areas were created based on expert advice and within these ESRs specific Economic Areas were chosen. All businesses within the Economic Areas were listed, and a sample of businesses chosen for interview.

   All enterprises that employ over 50 employees were interviewed. Within each economic area one in 10 enterprises that employ between 10 and 50 employees were interviewed. These enterprises were chosen randomly in a circular systematic manner by the field supervisors. Only one of any business type was interviewed, and only

non-agricultural businesses in any Economic Area were included. Sixty businesses were targeted in Kingston and also Montego Bay, with 40 in Mandeville, making a total of 160 interviews. A total of 159 questionnaires were accepted for analysis.

Study Limitations

This study, though comprehensive in scope, is limited in some key respects, and its execution faced some challenges. The lack of data in some important areas resulted in the study varying from the intended scope of work. These included:

a) The initial ToR anticipated a demographic profile of the Deaf who have transitioned from school to the labour force over the last 3 -5 years. The main providers of secondary education for the Deaf do not currently have a database that would support this level of analysis, although in at least one instance effort is being made to develop a system that would capture this data as part of a structured transition service. Although there is data on the number of persons placing job applications with the JAD Social Services Unit, the data do not provide the ages of the applicants, or when they left school.

b) The survey of employers only included organisations in the private sector, and hence does not capture the views and perceptions of public sector entities. It also does not reflect the extent to which the public sector is an employer of the Deaf, particularly those working in educational institutions, which serve the Deaf Community.

4. Review of the Literature

The review of the literature is organised around thematic issues affecting person with disabilities, and in particular the Deaf. The review first examines the question of equal opportunity and access for the disabled, and then addresses matters specifically of concern to the Deaf community. These include the issues of human rights protection, education, communication, and employment. The

review also examines key issues affecting the integration of the Deaf in the labour force.

4.1. Disability, Access and Equal Opportunity

The full and equal participation of the PWDs is not assured in all societies. In many countries structural or institutional barriers exist, which prevent PWDs from enjoying their full rights as citizens, and accessing opportunities in the same manner as persons without disabilities. The World Report on Disabilities (2011), points out that "Many people with disabilities do not have equal access to health care, education, and employment opportunities, do not receive the disability-related services that they require, and experience exclusion from everyday life activities' (page xxi). To counter this exclusion, and consequent on the passage of the ICRPD, the issues affecting the disabled are increasingly being seen as human rights issues. Framing as human rights issues, places an obligation on state parties to uphold and protect the rights of the disabled. This obligation presupposes that state parties can in fact make provisions, which allow persons with disabilities to 'have access to the economic and social life of their communities' (Gayle-Geddes, 2014:xiii). Conceding that government policies and programmes can minimize this exclusion, suggests that the idea that PWDs are, by nature of their disability, automatically precluded from full citizenship, is rebuffed.

This 'natural exclusion' premise formed the basis of the policy discussions around disabilities for decades, before the concepts of integration and normalization were introduced, which reflected a growing awareness of the capabilities of persons with disabilities (Standard Rules for the Equalisation of Persons with Disabilities, 1993:3). In fact, the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) provided the basis on which disability was defined for years (ibid:8), and defined disability as 'any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.' This focus on the diminished ability of the individual, rather than on the hostility of the physical, social and economic environment to persons with disability, drew heavy criticism, and forced a reassessment of what being disabled really means. The result was the emergence or the 'social model of disability', in which people are seen as 'disabled by society, rather than by their bodies' (WRD,2011:4).

The 'social model of disability'[2] posits that it's 'structural or institutional' discrimination, which disenables persons, not necessarily the inherent nature of their difference. The Proponents of this model (Wasserman, 2001[3]; Koch, 2001[4]) make the case that disability results only when the physical or other

Box 1: The ICF Classification.

In the ICF, problems with human functioning are categorized in three inter-connected areas:

Impairments are problems in body function or alterations in body structure for example, paralysis or blindness

Activity limitations are difficulties in executing activities for example, walking or eating

Participation restrictions are problems with involvement in any area of life for example, facing discrimination in employment or transportation.

Disability refers to difficulties in all three areas of functioning, and arises from the interaction of health conditions with contextual factors – environmental and personal factors.

World Report on Disability, 2011: 5

[2] In contrast with the medical model which focuses on the physical or other limitations of the person.

[3] Wasserman, David, 2001. "Philosophical Issues in the Definition of and Social Response to Disability.' In *Handbook of Disability Studies.* Edited by Gary Albercht, Katherine Seelman and Micheal Bury, 219-51. California, Sage Publications.

[4] Tom **Koch**, "Disability and difference: balancing social and physical constructions," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 27 (2001), 370-376.

difference is not accommodated by society. Hence, in this model, a physical condition is seen as an 'impairment', which only becomes a 'disability' when routine social interactions are made difficult by the absence of sufficient support in the social environment. This deficit in support, renders access to equal opportunities impossible, as historically, persons with disabilities have largely been provided for through solutions, such as residential institutions and special schools that segregate them (World Report on Disabilities, 2011:3). However, recognizing that in addition to the social barriers, there are real medical concerns about level of functioning which affect PWDs, the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF),* has sought to integrate the medical and social aspects of disability, and now acknowledges that disability is a bio-psychosocial condition. This classification, melds the thinking in both arenas, identifying both the medical and social issues as important. The bio-psychosocial concept embraces the definition of disability used in the ICRPD, that it results from the interaction of persons with impairments with their environment. Defining disability as an 'interaction' establishes that the extent of disability does not depend on the extent of the impairments, and that persons who are disabled require special supports which will allow them to engage fully as citizens.

In absence of these supports, persons with disabilities (PWDs) face several disabling barriers, such as:

- Inadequate policies and standards
- Negative attitudes
- Lack of provision of services
- Substandard service delivery
- Inadequate funding
- Lack of accessibility
- Lack of consultation and involvement
- Lack of data and evidence to respond to their needs (World Report on Disabilities, 2011).

As a result of these barriers, PWDs are either excluded from the education system or access poor quality education, face inordinate difficulties securing employment, are more likely to be poor, and when employed earn a lower mean income than persons without disabilities (WHO, 2011). There is some evidence also, that PWDs also experience poorer health outcomes than the general population as a result of barriers to access to quality health care and information (ibid).

In Jamaica, 2010 data showed that there was a higher level of poverty among PWDs (23.0 per cent), than the 17.0 per cent among the non-PWD community, (Benfield, 2010).[5] More broadly, the World Bank (cited in Gayle Geddes, 2014:19) estimates that 84.0 per cent of the PWDs in Latin America and the Caribbean live in poverty. Work by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (2014) also shows that PWDs were almost twice as likely to experience food poverty as those without disabilities (cited in Gayle Geddes, 2014:19). More recent work (Moncrieffe, 2014:7)[6], found that PWDs in Jamaica are aware of the deficiencies in their education and skills, and acknowledge that this was one of the greatest barriers they face to finding gainful employment, despite their desire to work.

Not all PWDs are equally disadvantaged. The experience with disability can be influenced by age, gender, socio-economic status, sexuality, and ethnicity (WDR, 2011:8). Disabled women, for example, may, depending on their social context, experience more severe disability than men who are disabled. A woman may suffer the consequences of the combined disadvantage of gender and impairment. In some societies where women as a group can only access basic education, and menial employment, this situation is made even worse by the fact that an impairment, and for disabled women, it may mean that the only possible source of economic security,

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[5] Benfield, Warren. 2010. *Poverty and Perception in Jamaica*. Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.

[6] Moncrieffe, Joy. 2014. Training Needs Assessment of PATH Beneficiaries with Disabilities and Capacity Assessment of the Non-Governmental Organisations Providing Skills Training for Persons with Disabilities. Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Kingston Jamaica.

marriage, is not available to them. The extent of exclusion also depends on the severity of the impairment. There is evidence which suggests that the most excluded groups are those with severe mental or intellectual impairments, while those most easily integrated include those with mild physical impairments (WDR, 2011:11). Wealth and status can help overcome activity limitations and participation restrictions, making PWDs who are born into poor families most likely to suffer the full impact of their impairment.

Policies and programmes which seek to address the needs of the disabled community, have therefore focused on the integration of PWDs into the social and economic life of the community. The Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for the Disabled (SREOPD), issued by the United National General Assembly in 1993, was the first concentrated effort to provide guidelines for the changes which were necessary to ensure that steps are taken to "ensure that girls, boys, women and men with disabilities, as members of their societies, may exercise the same rights and obligations as others" (SREOPD, 1993: Art.15). Developed on the basis of experiences and insights gained during the UN Decade for Disabled Persons (1983-1992), these Rules recognised that the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities is an essential contribution in the general and worldwide effort to mobilize human resources. The Rules required that the process through which the various systems of society and the environment, such as services, activities, information and documentation, are made available to all, particularly to persons with disabilities. It further noted that persons with disabilities have the right to remain within their local communities, and they should receive the support they need within the ordinary structures of education, health, employment and social services.

In establishing the conditions for equal participation, the Rules cover the following areas:

A. **Awareness Raising:** this requires states to take action to raise awareness in society about persons with disabilities, their rights, their needs, their

potential and their contribution. Additionally, states are to ensure that PWDs have information about the programmes and services, which are available to them, their families, and the general public. It also suggests that states encourage private enterprises to include 'disability issues in all aspects of their activities'

B. **Medical Care:** ensure the provision of adequate medical care to all persons who are disabled. This includes early detection and treatment. Adequacy is measured not only by the quality of care that is provided, but also by the accessibility of the care. Accordingly, the Rules call for the training of community workers and primary care practioners in early detection and screening, and that they be provided with accurate information so they can give appropriate advice to families of PWDS

C. **Rehabilitation:** state parties should ensure the provision of rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities in order for them to reach and sustain their optimum level of independence and functioning. These services should include a wide range of activities, such as basic skills training to improve or compensate for the impairment, counselling of persons with disabilities and their families, developing self-reliance, and occasional services such as assessment and guidance

D. **Support Services:** states should ensure the development and supply of support services, including assistive devices for persons with disabilities, to assist them to increase their level of independence in their daily living and to exercise their rights.

All of the guidelines have been subsequently incorporated in the ICRPD, and to some extent in various national legislations, including Jamaica's Disabilities Act 2014.

4.2. Special Considerations in Protecting the Human Rights of the Deaf

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that there are 360[7] million people around the world with a "disabling hearing loss". This refers to hearing loss greater than 40dB in the better hearing ear in adults and a hearing loss greater than 30dB in the better hearing ear in children.[8] As a group, the Deaf are among the most excluded of all disabled groups. They face severe exclusion because of the difficulties of establishing basic communication with the wider hearing population. The communication challenges in school, home and community often result in Deaf persons being locked out of social, educational, and ultimately, employment opportunities.

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), while acknowledging that the Deaf share all the human rights of the non-deaf population, have noted that there are four basic factors in ensuring that the Deaf have equal access to these rights. These are:

A. **Sign Language:** this is the natural or first language of the Deaf, and varies across countries. There is no 'universal' sign language as, like oral languages, it varies according to countries' cultural, social, historical and religious heritage. The lack of recognition of sign language as a legitimate form of communication raises barriers to the full participation of the Deaf in multiple spheres of society

B. **Bi-lingual Education:** semi-illiteracy, illiteracy, and low education performance are features of the Deaf population across the world. The enrolment rate among Deaf children is low, and access to quality, appropriate education is limited. Quality education for the Deaf hinges on access to bi-lingual education using both sign language and a strong emphasis on the spoken and written language of the country. This approach, which is used extensively in North America and North Europe, has facilitated good learning results, as it supports the natural learning and communication environment of a Deaf child. The WFD reports that the strengthening of bilingual

[7] 328 million adults and 32 million children.

[8] http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs300/en/

education has resulted in increased literacy levels and a strong language base, which ultimately yield better success in a broad range of subjects in schools

C. **Accessibility:** unlike the physically disabled, the barriers to access faced by the Deaf have little to do with physical/infrastructural obstacles. More often the barriers lie in communications obstacles that limit access to information, whether this information comes through direct interaction with other people who do not use sign language, or from other sources (e.g. mass media). Accessibility in direct communication rests on the use of sign language via sign language interpreters. In other information distribution, Deaf people's right to obtain information in sign language should extend into official documents (sign language translations), mass media (sign language news and programmes) in order to increase Deaf people's opportunities to make free and informed decisions

D. **Interpreting:** where services/information are not available in sign language, the Deaf should have the right of a sign language interpreter to facilitate access. This applies to public higher education and use of a variety of government services (including health care and the legal system), and requires that societies create a system for provision of, and equal access to, sign language interpreters for all situations where they are required or requested. The availability of professionally trained interpreters works to the benefit of both the hearing and Deaf populations and, therefore, should not be the responsibility of the Deaf individual or non-state associations of the Deaf. Rather, the state should provide adequate facilities (including financial provision) for interpreters to be trained and deployed as necessary to allow the Deaf full access of their rights as citizens.

The ICRPD also reaffirms the obligation of the state to facilitate "the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the Deaf community", as well as ensure that,

> ‘the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deaf/blind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development (Article 24 s. 1 &2).

The 2011 “Deaf People and Human Rights’ report—a survey of 93 countries—found that relatively few countries deny Deaf people access to education, government services or equal citizenship on the basis of deafness alone. But lack of recognition of sign language, lack of systems for bilingual education, limited availability of sign language interpreting services, and widespread lack of awareness and knowledge about the situation of Deaf people, deprive most Deaf people of access to large sections of society. Thus, they are not able to truly enjoy even basic human rights (p.7).

The survey found that 77 countries recognised that Deaf people have the right to work and earn a salary, but only 47 have anti-discrimination legislation in the field of employment that protects Deaf people against discrimination at work. In all other countries, Deaf people’s access to education, especially higher education, is very limited. Only 23 countries provide bi-lingual education in sign language and the national language to Deaf children in some schools. Fifty countries stated that Deaf people can access university education, but only 18 countries provide sign language interpreting at universities and only 44 legally recognised sign language. Respondents reported the quality of education for Deaf people as low and the illiteracy rate as high, an indication that there is a ”massive ignorance in education systems about the importance of sign language in Deaf education”(p.6). Eighty-six per cent of the countries reported having sign language interpreters, but in only one-third do governments make these interpreters available at state cost to persons who are deaf. In all other countries the Deaf have to undertake the cost of interpreters in their interactions with state and routine private service providers. Only 11 countries acknowledged that the Deaf do not have access to government services, although the limited access to sign language interpretation presents an

effective barrier to services in most countries. Additionally, about one-third of the countries surveyed did not allow Deaf persons to hold drivers' licenses.[9]

4.3. Educating the Deaf: Issues and Alternative Strategies

Education is seen as a means of social mobility for many, and this is no different for the Deaf. It is one of the chief means via which the Deaf will be able to self-actualize and become mainstreamed in the social and economic life of their societies. Given its importance, the education of the Deaf has been the subject of significant research and debate for decades. The WFD estimates that 80.0 per cent of the Deaf people in the world have no access to education, and only 1.0 -2.0 per cent gets education in sign language (http://wfdeaf.org/human-rights). Without the benefit of a competitive education, Deaf persons are unable to claim sustainable livelihoods, and to participate in a wide range of occupational categories in the labour force. Limited education attainment confines the Deaf to lower level non-skilled occupations, and undermine their ability to secure their future, leaving many in poverty and increasing vulnerability. However, it remains an area of great challenge in many countries, particularly those in developing societies, where "children with hearing loss and deafness rarely receive any schooling" (WHO).

There is no consensus on whether Deaf children are best educated in inclusive classrooms or segregated classrooms with only other Deaf children. Much of the literature suggests that the 'right' approach—the least restrictive environment (LRE)—considers the level of impairment, the capacity of the schools to integrate Deaf children, and parental support. However, even where Deaf children are included in regular classrooms, researchers have argued that there is a limit to the types of activities in which they can be incorporated (Winston, 1994).

[9] Jamaica is slated to allow Deaf persons to hold drivers' licenses under the amended Road Traffic Act, which is awaiting passage in the House of Representatives.

The Salamanca Declaration and Plan of Action for Special Education

The Salamanca Declaration of 1994 promotes the concept of inclusive education for children with special needs. It notes, that in order to combat exclusion, as far as possible, children with special needs should be educated in 'regular' classrooms alongside other children. It further posits, "experience in many countries demonstrates that the integration of children and youth with special educational needs is best achieved within inclusive schools that serve all children within a community" (p.12). The Declaration notes that it is within this context that children with special needs have the best chance of achieving not only academic progress, but also social inclusion.

In tandem with this emphasis on inclusion, the Declaration points out that this would only be successful if education systems are reformed, and adapted to make the full integration of students with special needs possible. It recommends that within inclusive schools, children with special educational needs should receive whatever extra support they may require to ensure their effective education. This includes the training of teachers and education leaders, as well as the engagement of parents and peers in the effort.

However, recognizing the peculiarities of educating the Deaf, the Declaration acknowledges that in some instances, there may be reason to establish special schools or units in mainstream schools for this purpose (p.18). Consequently, the Declaration itself has done little to settle the question of how best to educate the Deaf, leaving room for both an inclusive and a specialized or segregated approach. This approach has also been adopted in the Draft Special Education Policy for Jamaica, which suggests "A system of inclusive education where possible, recognizing that some children may be best served in segregated facilities or home-based programmes."[10]

[10] Policy Summary- June 2010, Ministry of Education, Jamaica

4.4. Separate or Included: Which is Most Effective?

The literature concerned with inclusive education and learners who are deaf and hard of hearing has emphasized three principal benefits of inclusive education:

a) Social interaction and contact with children with normal hearing
b) Naturalistic access to typical language
c) Access to behavioural models of hearing peers, and children's social acceptance by hearing peers (Eriks-Brophy A, Durieux-Smith A, Olds J, Fitzpatrick EM, Duquette C, et al. (2012)).

However, advocates of inclusion admit that it is not, in and of itself, a panacea to the issues surrounding the education of the Deaf. Including the Deaf is more than simply providing interpreting services for Deaf students in the classroom. It requires modifications in teaching strategy, in classroom management, and in curriculum delivery.

It has been documented that, even with interpreting and note-taking support, Deaf/Hard of Hearing university students receive less information from lectures and tutorials than their hearing peers. In a study of sign language interpreting for deaf Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) students, Marschark, Sapere, Convertino, and Seewagen (2005) found that the students did not acquire as much information from lectures as their hearing peers even with experienced interpreters who were familiar to the students. In Australia, Napier and Barker (2004) conducted a study involving four deaf university students in a panel discussion about their perceptions of interpreting in lectures. These students reported that they never accessed 100.0 per cent of a university lecture, with estimates of how much they understood through sign language interpreting ranging from 50.0 per cent–90.0 per cent of lecture material. Examining the experience of Deaf/Hard of Hearing students at Queensland University over a period of 20 years, 1985–2005, Hyde (2006:3) notes that "most instructors were reluctant to invest time in training and professional development in how best to accommodate Deaf students," citing the small percentage of these students in their class. Similar findings have emerged from

work in the UK, which show that there were often communication difficulties arising from the interactions among lecturer, student and interpreter, and that many interpreters lacked the skills or training necessary to interpret at university level (Traynor & Harrington, 2003).

Problems have also been identified with inclusion through the use of interpreters in the classroom at the primary and secondary levels. Learning takes place in the entire classroom environment and not just through direct communication between student and teachers, which is the focus of interpreters. A regular classroom uses both visual and auditory methods of teaching. The Deaf learner has access to only one of these methods (the visual), and is therefore disadvantaged in any exercise that requires the use of both methods at the same time, e.g. listening and taking notes, or watching an activity while listening to the teacher. Using interpreters does not mitigate this handicap, as the student has to choose between watching the interpreter and doing another visual activity. Hence, the inability of the Deaf student to benefit from the side conversations and the nuances of classroom interaction means that they do not access the 'same' education as their hearing peers, even though they are in the same classroom.

Additionally, the mere fact of interpreters means that the information that is being relayed in class is passed through or processed by a third person before it reaches the Deaf learner. This process invariably affects the quality of the material that is transmitted to the student "no matter how skilled the interpreter, the teacher, and the student" (Winston, 1994:55). Interpreters are most effective when the child has already acquired a first/natural language and are linguistically, socially and academically ready to benefit from it (ibid). The use of interpreters in language acquisition is said to be ineffective because it deletes some essential elements of language (pronouns, prefixes, and suffixes) due to pace and time constraints (Winston, 1994:57).

Despite these shortcomings, in some countries such as Australia, educating Deaf students in regular classrooms is the norm. It is estimated that 84.0 per cent of Deaf

and Hard of Hearing children in Australia are now educated in regular classes, usually with support from itinerant teacher services. These students mostly are not provided with sign language interpreting services, and those with no residual hearing, rely on speech reading as a key learning strategy (Hyde & Power, 2003; Power & Hyde, 2002). The inclusion of Deaf children in mainstream education has been associated with good academic out-comes and greater development of social skills (Mogg and Geers, 1990; Stinson and Antia, 1999). Attending mainstream education was also associated with an increased level of social competence with hearing peers, although generally Deaf children can face considerable social challenges with their hearing peers (Batten, Oakes and Alexander, 2014:294). Research has found no difference in the social competence of fully and partially mainstreamed children, although differences in social competence of mainstreamed and segregated Deaf children have been identified. Wolters et al., 2011 found that deaf 12-year-old children in mainstream schools demonstrated lower antisocial and withdrawn behaviour and more prosocial behavior with peers compared with children in segregated education.

The evidence is by no means consistent, and experts caution that simply placing Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in classrooms with hearing children does not automatically lead to the positive outcomes previously assumed. In some settings, the meaningful social interaction, peer acceptance, and/or improvement in the children's social communication skills, do not materialise. Research has shown that children who are deaf/hard of hearing are more likely to be neglected by their hearing peers in regular schools and less likely to have a friend in the class than their classmates with normal hearing (Nunes, Pretzlik, & Olson, 2001). Further, children who were deaf/hard of hearing became easily isolated in regular schools, where unshared socio-linguistic practices and hearing-oriented participation structures were "crucial factors contributing to communicative failure between them and their hearing peers" (Yu-Han, Peters and Potmesil, 2014:427).

The evidence suggests that there may be some educational benefits to be derived from the full integration of the Deaf in mainstream school when these schools are

responsive to their special needs and teachers are trained in techniques and strategies for teaching the Deaf. However, Deaf students appear to have more difficulties integrating socially in mixed settings, due to communication barriers and difference in culture. A general conclusion has been that the interventions that are effective in improving academic outcomes for Deaf students require a considerable investment of resources, including time and effort, as well as extensive support for teachers.

4.5. The Deaf in the Labour Force

Just as in the classroom, in the absence of special accommodation in the workplace, Deaf people will be denied effective access to jobs that require constant direct communication with others. In fact, studies have shown that the requirements of communication have an impact on which occupations are considered to be appropriate for Deaf people (DeCaro, Mudgett-DeCaro, and Dowaliby 2001; Parasnis, Samar, and Mandke 1996; Weisel and Cinamon 2005). According to Welsh and MacLeod-Gallinger (1992), Deaf people are half as likely to have managerial and professional occupations as hearing people. Experience in Sweden shows that, in general, Deaf people are employed to a larger extent in occupations that require a low level of educational attainment (low-skill occupations) (Capella, 2003; MacLeod-Gallinger, 1992; Welsh & MacLeod-Gallinger, 1992), whereas hearing people, to a greater extent, are employed in occupations that require the highest levels of education (Capella, 2003). Consequently, the Deaf earn lower incomes and are more at risk of poverty than hearing people. The disadvantageous position of the Deaf is further highlighted by the fact that it is twice as common for people in the Deaf population than for people in the reference population to have a higher level of educational attainment than is required for their occupation (Rydberg, 2010:45). Interestingly, gender labour market segregation is also evident among the Deaf. Some studies report that Deaf men have a higher income from employment than Deaf women (Moore, 2002; Schroedel & Geyer, 2000; Walter, Clarcq & Thompson, 2002), despite the fact that Deaf women are more likely to have higher qualifications than Deaf men.

Research in Sweden has shown that differences in education achievement, level of income, and education-occupation alignment of the Deaf and hearing population were found to be unconnected to background factors such as sex and age. Rather, a "decisive factor" in these incongruities seemed to be linked to "the fact of being part of the Deaf population" (Rydberg 2010:46). Foster & MacLeod (2003) point out, for example, that access to informal conversation at workplaces is a central factor in people's ability to perform their jobs and to advance in their employment. Therefore, they conclude that having deficient tacit knowledge may influence the position of Deaf persons in the labour market.

Despite these barriers, work in Denmark suggests that with increasing levels of educational attainment, the difference between the employment rate of deaf and hearing people decreases, but education seems to be more crucial to Deaf people than to hearing people (Anon, 2006). Also, as the level of educational attainment increases, the occupational distributions of people in the Deaf and the general populations become more similar (MacLeod-Gallinger, 1992).

5. Institutional and Policy Framework for Deaf Inclusion in Jamaica

The full integration of the Deaf in the social and economic life of Jamaica must be examined in the context of the overall national development goals and the strategies for achieving those goals, particularly those related to education and workforce development. These goals and strategies are set out in the Vision 2030 Jamaica—National Development Plan, and its sector plans on education, and training and workforce development. Important too, is the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP), and the Special Education Policy, both of which provide the framework for the development of an inclusive education sector. While these address the education and training needs of the population, the Social Protection Strategy addresses ways in which the Government can assist the vulnerable to meet basic needs, thereby facilitating their inclusion in the country's socio-economic development. These elements of the institutional framework for the inclusion of the Deaf in Jamaica, are anchored by the

Disabilities Act 2014, which gives legal protection to persons with disabilities in several spheres, including the workplace.

Vision 2030 Jamaica—National Development Plan and Special Education

Vision 2030 is Jamaica's long term National Development plan, which has as its main objective the achievement of developed country status by 2030. Supported by seven guiding principles, the vision is built on the accomplishment of four national goals, which together address all the key social, economic and sustainable development policy challenges faced by Jamaica.

The goals of Vision 2030 are:

Goal 1: Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential

Goal 2: The Jamaican Society is secure, cohesive and just

Goal 3: Jamaica's economy is prosperous

Goal 4: Jamaica has a healthy natural environment

The Vision 2030 Education Sector Plan acknowledges that education is "a social indicator of a country's economic development and the stock and quality of its human capital"(PIOJ, 2009:3). It goes on to note that 'on an individual level, formal education is one of several important contributors to the skills and socialisation of an individual and helps citizens to learn how to function in society and be successful in life' (ibid). The Plan envisages that the average beneficiary of 'our education and training system will have completed the secondary level of education, acquired a vocational skill, be proficient in the English Language, a foreign language, Mathematics, a science subject, Information Technology, participated in sports and the arts, be aware and proud of our local culture and possess excellent interpersonal skills and workplace attitudes.'[11] Additionally, the training plan is built on the understanding that changes in the global economy make knowledge and skills acquisition among the most important long-term economic investment a country

[11] Vision 2030 Education Sector Plan p.4

can make. Shifts in production modalities, products and services and the impact of these changes on competitiveness, essentially dictate the focus of Jamaica's workforce development and training strategies. Young people are key to these changes and the country's ability to grow its economy and compete globally. Hence, in addition to traditional academic and technical skills, the education and training system must produce individuals who are flexible and possess attributes such as initiative, problem identification and solving, communication, and team spirit.[12] Moreover, career development programmes also need to be infused into education and training programmes to ensure a smooth transition from school-to-work.

In addressing the issues faced by students with disabilities, the Education Sector plan notes that the Government of Jamaica (GOJ), had introduced several initiatives including the accreditation from the NCTVET for the Lister Mair Gilby High School for the Deaf in four of its vocational programmes, and the integration of vision impaired students into mainstream classrooms. The plan acknowledges that the key challenges facing special needs education were:

a. Inadequate number and distribution of institutions to support the variation in special needs across the island
b. Inadequate number of trained individuals to service the number of individuals with varying special needs
c. Inadequate equipment to support training for some special needs
d. Inadequate financing to support the varying needs
e. Inadequate support in the homes of individuals with special needs
f. Inadequate programmes to support the gifted (PIOJ, 2009:28).

However, while the plan establishes indicators, and sets goals and targets for the sector in general, it does not specifically outline ways of addressing the identified challenges.

[12] Vision 2030 Training and Workforce Development Plan p.7

National Education Strategic Plan

The National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) is linked to the objectives of the Vision 2030 national development plan and is consistent with the recommendations of the 2004 Task Force on Education Reform in Jamaica. The objectives of the plan include providing access to quality education to all children achieving universal literacy, and providing a safe and secure school environment. The NESP recognizes that all children should have access to educational opportunities appropriate for their developmental age and stage. This aspiration is unachieved, as special needs students are currently underserved in the education system. The Plan also recognizes that there should be provisions of services to meet the needs of children who are physically and/or mentally impaired. It outlines efforts to improve physical accessibility of schools to persons who are physically impaired, and notes that while there are a few government-funded special schools for students who are visually or hearing impaired, the reach is not islandwide or universal.

Special Education Policy

The Special Education Policy is used to support the implementation of the NESP and the inclusive education objectives of the Ministry of Education. The Special Education Policy will guide the implementation of the special education mandate of ensuring adequate and appropriate provisions that will enable access and equity in the planning and delivery of special education services.

Access to Training and Vocational Education

Access is also provided through HEART/NTA for those students, including those with special needs, who have had limited success in traditional academic education. Although, the linkages between the traditional academic system and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and opportunities available through adult education and non-formal education, have been limited, they are now opening up with the introduction of the Career Advancement Programme (CAP). In addition, the Abilities Foundation, a registered voluntary organisation, works in collaboration

with HEART Trust/NTA and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), to provide training for those young adults (age 17+) with special needs, so as to assist them in acquiring skills and decent work.

Social Protection Strategy

The implementation of 2014 Social Protection Strategy developed by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), is key to the inclusion of the Deaf in society. The Strategy was developed to ensure the protection of Jamaicans, especially the most vulnerable, from social and economic shocks that erode their living standards and make them vulnerable to poverty. Among its objectives is to ensure that vulnerable or disadvantaged population groups or individuals have recourse to a safety net facilitating basic income security and social services (PIOJ, 2014:17). The Strategy provides for a Social Protection Floor, which will "'seek to guarantee a minimum provision of social protection, some of which will be public goods and services" (PIOJ, 2014:18), for all citizens, but particularly the most vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. When implemented, this Strategy will provide a much needed safety net for PWDs, especially those who are unemployed, and living in poverty.

The Disabilities Act 2014

Part VI of the Disabilities Act, bars employers from discriminating against a person with a disability who is otherwise qualified for employment unless this can be justified. This section points out that the employer should be non-discriminatory

(a) in the terms of employment afforded to that employee

(b) in relation to the opportunities afforded to the employee for promotion, transfer, training or the receipt of any other benefit; or

(c) in the handling of dismissals which cannot be by virtue of his disability, without reasonable cause.

The Act outlines that justifiable unemployment is not regarded as discrimination if it cannot be avoided in the circumstances, having regard to any reasonable arrangements that may be implemented. It further states that it is the duty of the employer to make reasonable adjustments if employment arrangements, or the workplace itself, place a PWD at disadvantage section 30(b). However, the act states that if an employee becomes disabled, the employer shall redeploy the employee to a position that is commensurate with the current skills and abilities of the employee, and does not result in loss in remuneration and benefits to the employee. These legal protections for PWDs are important in helping to secure employment opportunities for the Deaf, and so too are the perceptions and experiences of employers of working with the Deaf.

6. Deaf Education in Jamaica: Provision and Outcomes[13]

Education Provision

In Jamaica, the majority of Deaf education takes place in segregated settings. Since the 1930s, educating the Deaf has been spearheaded by the non-state sector. However, since the 1970s, the GOJ has become a major partner in Deaf education. NGOs like the Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD), Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf, Maranatha School for the Deaf and Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf have focused on the development and operation of special programmes for the Deaf, with budgetary support for recurrent expenses from the GOJ.

There are currently 12 specialized education institutions for Deaf children in Jamaica. Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf (CCCD) has three schools (located in Kingston, Mandeville and Montego Bay); Maranatha School for the Deaf has a facility in St. Elizabeth; Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf is in Montego Bay; and seven educational programmes operated by the JAD in Kingston, Clarendon, St. Ann and Portland. Despite this geographic spread, the demand for services outpace the supply, resulting in many Deaf children being separated from their families in order

[13] Some of the background information used in this section is taken from the TOR prepared by the Planning Institute of Jamaica.

to access schooling and other support services, which are concentrated in a few urban centres.

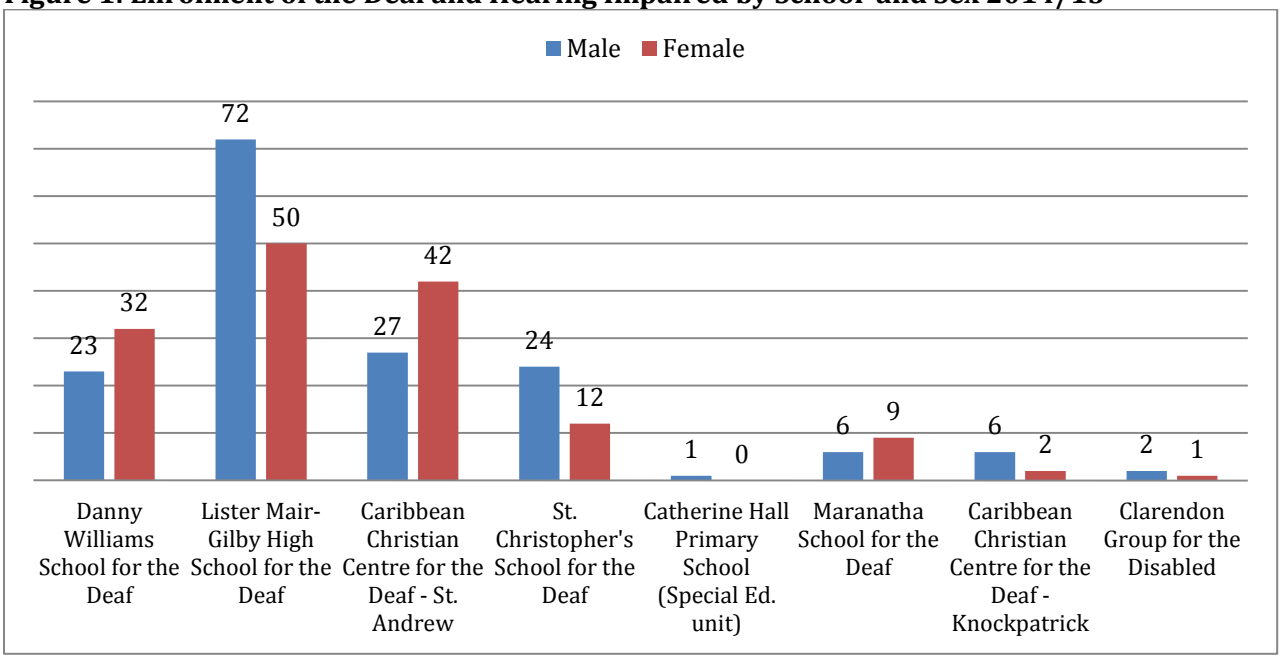
At least three of the schools (Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf, Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf and St. Christopher's) offer residential facilities for students from kindergarten to high school.

In a country of approximately 2.7 million people, Jamaica's Deaf population is currently estimated at 54 000 (ToR). The JAD Hearing Services which conducts hearing screens and diagnostic assessments, identifies approximately 200 children (0–18 years) with hearing loss annually. Between 2012–2014 the department diagnosed 1 213 adults and 519 children with a hearing loss. Approximately two-thirds of this number experienced a mild to moderate loss while the other 34 per cent experienced losses in the severe to profound range (JAD: details in Appendix C). The latter group of children is normally referred to schools for the Deaf, while those children with mild to moderate hearing loss are generally able to cope in mainstream programmes with assistive devices.

Data from the National School Census for 2014/15 show that 310 students (169 boys and 141 girls) were enrolled in Schools for the Deaf[14] across the island (Figure 1).

[14] One child identified as deaf was enrolled in the special education unit of a mainstream primary school. The data does not include the 51 students enrolled at the Jamaica Christian Centre for the Deaf.

Figure 1: Enrolment of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired by School and Sex 2014/15



Source: Ministry of Education, School Census.

Education Quality and Performance

JAD School statistics (2011) indicated that approximately 75 per cent of graduates at the secondary level do not attain marketable skills by school-leaving age. This is attributed to several factors, including late entry into an appropriate educational programme, tepid parental support, and ineffective instructional strategies. Despite early diagnosis of hearing loss, many parents delay in enrolling their Deaf children in a School for the Deaf (personal communication, JAD, January 2015). These children are therefore deprived of language stimulation in the early years, which negatively impacts development of their literacy skills. Without age appropriate communication and literacy skills these students encounter much difficulty in learning curriculum content and experience significant delays in their development.

Teacher Qualifications and Fitness for Purpose.

Jamaican Sign Language (JSL) is used as the primary method of instruction in schools for the Deaf. Lip-reading is not widely used and, prior to the exclusive use of JSL, teachers used the 'total communication method'. This is a mixed approach that included facial and body gestures, American Sign Language, and JSL.[15] A major problem in Jamaica is that not all teachers of the Deaf are bilingual, that is, they are not all fluent in sign language. This creates a communication barrier in the classroom, with the teachers being unable to adequately facilitate students' learning. While not all have the language proficiency to teach Deaf students, approximately 70 per cent the teachers in the schools are tertiary qualified, with 41.2 per cent being trained university graduates, and 28.0 per cent being trained college graduates (Table 1). The particular areas of specialisation were not available. Although the JAD schools appear to have a larger proportion of qualified teacher ranging from 100.0 per cent for Danny Williams to 75.0 per cent for LMG, qualified teachers are equally distributed throughout the system.

Table 1: Qualification of Teachers of the Deaf by Sex: 2014/15

Special Education Teachers by School, Qualification and Sex (2014/2015)													
	Pre-Trained University Graduate		Untrained Secondary Level Graduate		Trained University Graduate		Trained Instructor		Trained College Graduate		Untrained Tertiary Level Graduate		Grand Total
School Name	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Danny Williams School for the Deaf	0	0	0	0	1	12	0	0	0	3	0	0	16
Carberry Court Special School	0	1	0	0	0	7	0	0	2	5	0	0	15
Lister Mair-Gilby High School for the Deaf	0	3	1	4	3	16	0	0	1	10	1	1	40
Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf - St. Andrew	1	1	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	11
St. Christopher's School for the Deaf	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	5	0	0	10
Maranatha School for the Deaf	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

[15] Interview with Senior Education Officer for Special Education.

Special Education Teachers by School, Qualification and Sex (2014/2015)													
	Pre-Trained University Graduate		**Untrained Secondary Level Graduate**		**Trained University Graduate**		**Trained Instructor**		**Trained College Graduate**		**Untrained Tertiary Level Graduate**		**Grand Total**
Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf - Knockpatrick	1	1	0	1	0	6	0	2	0	6	0	0	17
Clarendon Group for the Disabled	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
Total	2	7	1	20	4	45	0	4	3	30	1	2	119
Grand Total	9		21		49		4		33		3		

Source: Ministry of Education, National School Census 2014/15

The shift to JSL-only has been accommodated by the provision of training programmes for teachers through JAD, allowing them the opportunity to acquire the language or improve their proficiency. The University of West Indies also offers a Bachelor's Degree in Sign Language Interpretation, which began in 2006, and is open to not only teachers, but anyone seeking to work to facilitate improved communication with the Deaf.

The Ministry of Education does not currently have any specific required qualifications for teachers of the Deaf. Their employment is covered by the general principle that teachers must be competent for the job" (personal communication, February 2, 2015). This is reinforced in the Draft Special Education Policy, which requires "certification of teachers serving students with special needs in the areas of special education relevant to the institution in which they work". Deaf specific teacher training is now available both at the Mico University College and at Sam Sharpe Teachers' College, but some teachers who were in the system prior to the introduction of these programmes have not benefitted. Those who have benefitted are not required to master sign language even if their specialisation is Deaf education. This raises the real concern that although the teachers are technically qualified, in the absence of JSL proficiency, many are not de facto qualified for the jobs that they hold.

Working in tandem with JAD, the MOE is also seeking to strength the accountability mechanisms for teachers of the Deaf. This will be done through the development of specific accountability standards for teachers in schools for the Deaf. Although there has not been a full school inspection of provision for the Deaf, the MoE expects to have this done.

The use of Deaf Culture Facilitators (DCF)—although only in the schools operated by JAD—is also endorsed by the MoE, as this is felt to strengthen the learning environment, particularly when taught by teachers who are not JSL proficient. The DCFs are used not only to facilitate learning, but also to help students foster a strong Deaf identity, understanding what it means to be deaf, some of the social issues they will face, and the nuances of operating in a hearing society.

Education Performance of the Deaf

Although low literacy and academic performance have been a persistent problem among Deaf students, this is not an indication of low cognitive capability. Deaf children of Deaf parents have demonstrated the capacity to achieve performance levels consistent with grade/age appropriate performance milestones of hearing students. What makes the difference in their development is early access to a language they can understand and acquire visually, and immersion in a learning environment (both at home and school) that is empowering and offers full communication access

With low levels of English literacy and academic achievement, the Deaf graduate is ill-equipped for the world of work, and often ends up in lower level manual occupations. An analysis of employment application forms between 2007 and 2011 from the JAD Social Services Department indicated that many Deaf adults experienced difficulty completing a basic form to provide a personal profile. It was observed that some of the Deaf clients did not understand basic self-descriptive concepts such as their first and last names. The results presented in the Table 2-4 are indicative of the general level of achievement of Deaf students in standard national examinations.

Table 2: GSAT Results at a School for the Deaf, 2012- 2014

Subject	2012	2013				2014		
	Student 1	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Mathematics	53	25	22	27	0	46	25	35
Science	30	33	22	30	0	40	42	33
Social Studies	44	23	20	25	0	37	35	37
Language Arts	34	27	32	30	0	32	32	33
Communication Task	8	4	2	6	0	6	5	6

Source: St. Christopher's School for the Deaf

This level of performance is not observed in all the schools for the Deaf, as Table 3 shows that the results for Danny Williams School are comparable to the national performance in GSAT.

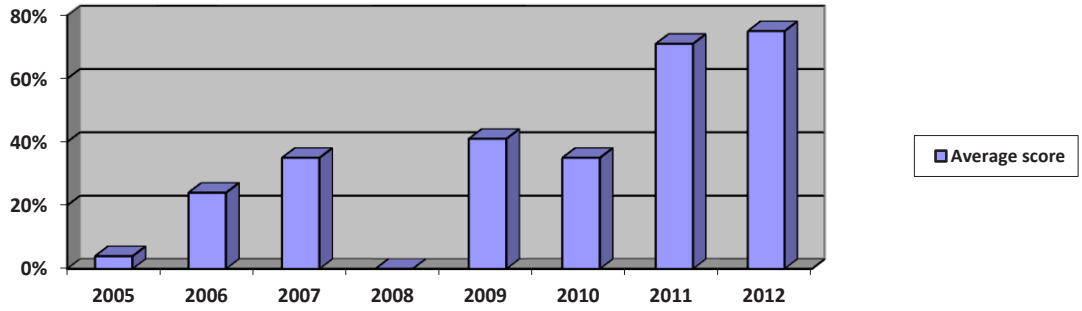
Table 3: Comparison of Average Performance Scores of Students at the Danny Williams School for the Deaf with National Averages on GSAT 2012 Sub-Tests

	Mathematics	**Science**	**Social Studies**	**Language. Arts**	**Communication Task**
Average scores - Male (1)	85	83	79	62	75
Average scores Females (5)	65	62	59	51	72
School Average	**69**	**66**	**63**	**53**	**75**
National Average	63	64	62	60	75

Source: Table provided by JAD.

Of note is the performance of students at Danny Williams in the Communications Task component of the GSAT. Data shows that this performance increased from 5.0 per cent in 2005, to 75.0 per cent in 2012 (Figure 2). The JAD attributes this improvement to the introduction of bilingual education.

Figure 2: Average Performance Scores on GSAT Communication Task of Students at the Danny Williams School for the Deaf, 2005-2012



Source: Figure Provided by JAD.

While this approach has been introduced across the JAD system, not all schools/units have enjoyed the same success as Danny Williams. Hence, education performance varies significantly, even within the JAD system. Table 4 shows that the May Pen Unit's performance in the 2013 Grade Four Literacy Test (GFLT) was weak, with only three of the eight students entered scoring above 50 per cent for word recognition, although there was stronger performance in the writing component of the test.

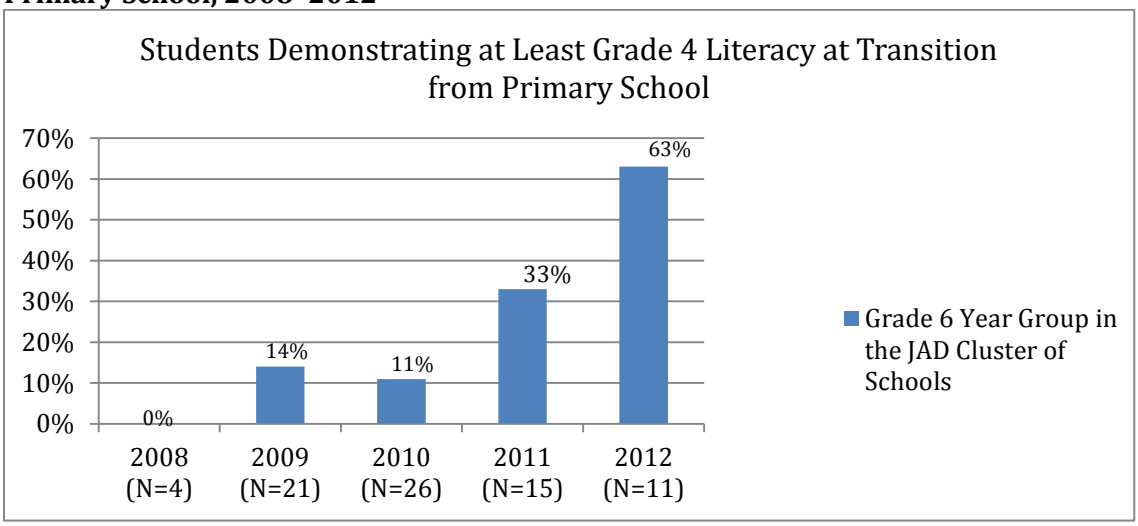
Table 4: GFLT Results for a School for the Deaf, 2013

GRADE 4 Literacy Test								
Subject	Jun-13							
	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6	Student 7	Student 8
Word Recognition	11 (27%)	31 (77%)	9 (22%)	20 (50%)	12 (30%)	27 (67%)	30 (75%)	37 (92%)
Reading Comprehension	9 (30%)	11 (36%)	7 (23%)	11 (36%)	10 (33%)	10 (33%)	7 (23%)	8 (26%)
Writing	0	8 (100%)	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	5 (62%)	5 (62%)	5 (62%)

Source: May Pen Deaf Unit

Despite this weak indicative performance in GFLT, the JAD reports that there has been a significant increase in the number of Deaf children who achieve mastery of Grade 4 literacy by the time they transition from primary to secondary school. Figure 3 shows that this percentage moved from 0.0 to 63.0 in the 5-year period, 2008–2012.

Figure 3: Students Demonstrating at Least Grade 4 Literacy at Transition from Primary School, 2008–2012



Source: Provided by JAD

At the secondary level, only some students actually sit the terminal examinations at the end of high school[16], and few manage to pass (Table 5).

At the CSEC level, pass-rates in English Language and Mathematics have been so erratic, and the number sitting so few that, comparisons with the national performance may not be meaningful. Suffice it to note that the overall performance has been poor, with the strongest performance in 2010, when 50.0 per cent (3 out of 6 students) passed English Language, and all 5 students sitting visual arts were successful. The strongest performance was in Information Technology.

[16] Entrance to sit the examinations is based on the teacher assessment of readiness, a practice widely used across the education system in Jamaica.

Table 5: Lister Mair Gilby[17] CSEC Results, 2009–2014

SUBJECT	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	SAT	PASSED	SAT	PASSED	SAT	PASSED	SAT	PASSED	SAT	PASSED	SAT	PASSED
ENGLISH A	4	1	6	3	11	1	7	1	5	2	7	3
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	7	6	-	-	4	1	3	1	5	5		
MATHEMATICS	2	2	8	0	11	1	5	0	4	1	5	2
PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTS	7	2	6	3	-	-	2	2	7	5	3	2
PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS	1	0	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SOCIAL STUDIES	10	3	6	0	7	2	3	0	2	0	5	1
VISUAL ARTS	3	2	5	5	3	0	1	1	6	6	-	-
OFFICE ADMINISTRATION	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	1	1	0	-	-
TECHNICAL DRAWING	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	3	2
ENGLISH B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0
HUMAN AND SOCIAL BIOLOGY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2

Source: Ministry of Education, Planning Division.

Poor school attendance is seen as one factor that affects the educational attainment of the Deaf. The administrator at the May Pen Unit, and the principal of Lister Mair Gilby (LMG) note that some parents are unable to afford the cost of sending their children to school regularly and, therefore, their education is fragmented. This is compounded by the fact that due to the small number schools catering to the Deaf and their scattered locations, some children have to travel long distances to access a school, adding to the already high cost of education. It was noted too, that while Deaf children receive a benefit from the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), it is a disability benefit, and not an education benefit. Consequently, to secure their PATH payment, Deaf students do not have to meet the attendance criteria required of other students on the programme. This removes an important incentive to school attendance.

[17] The majority of Deaf students, who sit the CSEC, are LMG students, although CCCD also enters candidates.

The failure of the education system to consistently produce Deaf graduates who meet required standards in literacy and academic achievement contribute to the persistence of low expectations of Deaf persons and social stigma associated with deafness. Over the past five years, approximately 142 Deaf students have graduated from secondary level institutions. Over 50 per cent are from the JAD group of schools, approximately 35 per cent from CCCD, and the remaining 15 per cent from the other institutions combined. There are still a large number of Deaf/Hard of Hearing individuals not enrolled in any educational facility and/or identified late through other services. Less than 5 per cent of those graduated within the past five years have continued to tertiary institutions (the majority overseas) and approximately 20 per cent or less have gained part-time/full-time employment. This reflects an unemployment rate of 80 per cent or more within the Deaf/Hard of Hearing population in Jamaica.

7. Labour Market Issues affecting Youth In Jamaica: A context

The experience of the Deaf in the labour force is best understood in the context of the global youth experience with employment in Jamaica. On the rebound from the immediate effects of the global crisis that began in 2008, the level of employment in Jamaica was the highest in 2014 compared with the previous 6 years, as average employment grew by 1.7 per cent over 2013 (PIOJ, 2015). The number of persons employed increased by 20 000 and, correspondingly, both youth and adult unemployment rates fell in 2014.[18] A feature of the Jamaican labour market is that it is marked by a high degree of informality and, in 2012, 38.3 per cent of workers were employed in the informal sector (ILO, 2014:8). This is consistent with the fact that the labour force is largely unskilled, with 70.2 per cent of persons having no formal training. Women, and in particular young women, have the least favourable

[18] Youth unemployment fell from 37.7 per cent to 34.2 per cent, and the rate for adults fell from 11.6 per cent to 10.1 per cent (PIOJ, 2015:21.1).

labour market attachment, consistently experiencing lower rates of participation and higher rates of unemployment (PIOJ, 2015).

Although employment levels have risen, youth unemployment in Jamaica has remained significantly above the national rate (Table 6), a pattern similar to that found in many other countries (ILO, 2013).[19] This high level of unemployment has underscored the need for a clear understanding of the school-to-work transition experience of young people in addressing this persistent issue.

Table 6: Youth Unemployment Rate by Gender, January 2014 and 2015

Age Group	January 2014			January 2015		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
14-19	41.9	54.1	35.2	41.0	50.3	35.7
20-24	31.4	38.8	25.7	33.0	37.5	29.4
National	13.4	17.4	10.1	14.2	9.9	19.4

Source: STATIN (January 2015) Labour Force Survey

School to Work Transition of Youth in Jamaica

The concept of school-to- work transition refers to a period when young individuals, based on their initial education and training, develop and build skills, that help them find or create their own employment, and become productive members of the society. This 'transition' period begins before the end of secondary school, prior to their entry in the labour force, with the transition point being the point at which they leave school and are formally seeking a job. Young people[20] in Jamaica experience significant difficulties transitioning from school to work. Approximately 35.5 per cent of Jamaican youths have successfully transitioned from school to work. Another 41.0 per cent are still in transition and the remaining 23.5 per cent have not yet done so. Young men (41.6 per cent) have a higher transition rate than young women (29.3 per cent), and young people with higher levels of education have higher rates than other groups. Those who have transited did so over an extended

[19] Although compatible with the overall international trend, youth unemployment in Jamaica is significantly above the global rate, estimated at 12.6 per cent in 2013 (ILO, 2013).

[20] According to 2012 population estimates, youth aged 15–29 in Jamaica accounted for 27.9 per cent of the total population, of which 49.8 per cent were females and 50.2 per cent were males.

period of time, on average almost three years after completing school, with nearly a half eventually transitioning to a stable and satisfactory job (Table 7). This shows that the transition process is not linear, as most young people (about two-thirds) take an indirect path to stable employment. Many experienced periods of sporadic employment and unemployment before finding a relatively stable job.

Table 7: Transited Youth by Category and Age Group

Category of completed transition	Age group							
	15–19		20–24		25–29		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Stable & satisfactory job	12 400	35.3	52 100	48.1	63 300	50.4	127 800	47.5
Stable but non-satisfactory job	4 700	13.4	19 400	17.9	22 000	17.5	46 100	17.1
Satisfactory but temporary job	3 700	10.6	8 400	7.8	8 900	7.1	21 100	7.8
Satisfactory self-employment	14 300	40.7	28 300	26.1	31 300	25	74 000	27.5
Total	35 200	100	108 300	100	125 500	100	269 000	100

Source: ILO (2014): Jamaica School-to-Work Transition Study

Recent data (ILO, 2014[21]), found that despite the fact that the youth want to improve their education and skills to better position themselves in the labour market, only about one-third had completed any post-secondary education and training (Table 8).

Table 8: Out-of-school Youth by Level of Formal Education Completed (%)

Level of Formal Education	Female	Male	Total
None	0.5	0.9	0.7
Elementary school (primary)	13.1	15.1	14.1
Vocational school (technical high)	3.5	5.0	4.3
Secondary school	50.0	56.9	53.5
Vocational school (e.g. HEART)	21.3	15.9	18.6
University/Tertiary Education	11.2	6.2	8.7
Postgraduate Studies	0.3	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ILO (2014): Jamaica School-to-Work Transition Study

The data establish a clear correlation between the level of education achieved and the rate of unemployment among the youth (Table 9). Persons who had tertiary level education were significantly less likely to be unemployed than those who had

[21] The School to Work Transition Survey 2013 defined the youth as those in 15-29 years cohort.

lower levels of education. Nonetheless, it is of note that 20–25 per cent of young people with tertiary education, and roughly one-third of those with vocational training were unemployed. This is an indication of the extent of the problem young people face in the job market.

Table 9: Youth Unemployment Rate and Level of Formal Education Completed (%)

Formal Education Completed	Strict	Relaxed[22]
Elementary School (primary)	35.3	48.9
Vocational School (technical high)	34.6	47.7
Secondary School	35.1	45.4
Vocational School (e.g. HEART)	31.5	37
University/Tertiary, Postgraduate Education	21.8	25.4

Source: ILO (2014): Jamaica School-to-Work Transition Study

Given the low level of skills they bring to the market, the majority of the employed (75 per cent) found work in the lower levels of the service sector and as "shop and market sales workers" (ILO, 2014:5). Those who were working did so mainly in the informal sector (42.0 per cent) and one-third in informal employment outside the informal sector (ibid). The study also showed that among the employed, there was a high level of dissatisfaction with their current job, with 61 per cent of young people expressing the desire to change their jobs. Hence, the Deaf transition from school into a labour market, that is already unfavourable to young people, and even more so, to those with special needs.

8. School to Work Transition of the Deaf in Jamaica

The issues faced by the Deaf in the Jamaican labour force are consistent with those faced by Deaf people around the world. High levels of unemployment and employment in 'low status' occupations, resulting from low educational achievement, are consistent features of deaf experience internationally. The Deaf faces particular challenges in the labour market as a result of the peculiarities of their condition. The same issues that present barriers to the educational

[22] The relaxed youth unemployment rate is defined as the number of unemployed youth plus the number of discouraged youth divided by the youth labour force. It adds to the standard measure of unemployed youth those who are not technically unemployed because they do not meet the active job search criteria, but who would like to work (Youth Employment Network).

achievement of Deaf persons also affect their ability to fully participate in a range of jobs and occupational categories in the labour force. Chief among these barriers is the communication rift that the Deaf encounter in a hearing world, and cultural attitudes towards them. Consequent on these attitudinal and educational concerns is the lack of any systemic facilitation of the Deaf in either the work place or hearing post secondary institutions.

8.1. The Deaf in the Labour Force

There is little work on the experience or participation of the Deaf in the Jamaican labour force. But what is known, based on information from JAD and other service providers, is that the students who leave their schools move into low-status, low-paying jobs that require repetitive manual effort. In rare instances, students through the support of their parents have been able to access tertiary level education, and perhaps return to JAD in administrative/managerial capacities. Even for those who are employed in non-JAD related workplaces, little is known of their experiences in these organisations and their perspectives on their own preparedness to cope with the transition to the labour force. What is clear, is that as jobs increasingly require higher qualifications, it will become more important for Deaf people to receive the best education and transition services possible for them to succeed in the labour market.

8.2. Special Needs Transition Programme

The Ministry of Education has recognised that, given the nature of the school-to-work transition experience in Jamaica, clear transition policy and programme are needed to guide the process, especially for students with special needs, whose needs are "a bit different from the general population".[23] It has proposed a "comprehensively structured interest-based programme, which will position students needing alternative options for self-actualization at the secondary level at a

[23] Interview with Special Education Specialist, Education Systems Transformation Programme (ESTP), February 26, 2015.

more advantageous point from which to acquire quality vocational and other job-related competencies" (MOE, undated). The objective of the programme is to allow for equitable access to the labour market or post-secondary education. The programme recommends that education facilities implement a systematized procedure driven by multidisciplinary collaboration among transition specialists, parents and teachers. Under this system, the team determines the programme of instruction and educational experiences needed to prepare the student for adult roles and responsibilities. In addition to work-experience and vocational evaluation, transition activities may/should include participation in community experiences aimed at facilitating readiness for employment and adult life (ibid). For the special needs group, it is also important that transition plans help equip students in the areas of leisure, family life, social skills, job skills, and agency and self-advocacy (personal communication, February 26, 2015). Job experience while still a student is universally considered a key aspect of any effective transition plan. One key result of the development and implementation of a system-wide transition programme is that all students with special needs would benefit from continuity of planning and an enhanced quality of adult life in the long term.

For students with special needs, this transition approach will be supported by the Special Education Policy, which has as its main goal achieving "equity and access to educational opportunities for children and youth with special needs at all levels of the education system" (MOE, Draft Special Education Policy). This speaks specifically to the implementation of a transition plan for students at the secondary level, stipulating that each student must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which includes a statement of transition services needed. Transition planning must begin at age 16, must be individualized and based on the student's expressed needs, preferences and interests (MOE, Special Education Policy Summary, June 2010).

Currently, Deaf students sit the same national and regional exams as their hearing peers, despite the deficit they face in their acquisition of language and, in particular,

writing and comprehending the English Language.[24] This has been identified as a potential barrier to their post-school transition and, in order to address this, the MoE is currently working on exit standards and alternative pathways for different groups of children, including those with special needs (Personal communication, February 2, 2015). This does not mean that the Deaf will be denied the opportunity to pursue an academic pathway, but rather, that students and their families will be able to choose from a variety of options for successful school completion.

8.3. Access to Post Secondary and Tertiary Education

Hampered by both poor education outcomes and a culture that reinforces their limitations, Deaf students often struggle to secure gainful employment or to access post-secondary education. As reinforced by the survey findings for Jamaica, school-leavers who do not participate in higher education, vocational training, or apprenticeships are vulnerable to marginalization in the work-force, moving from school into poorly paid part-time or temporary work and finding it difficult to break out of a cycle that intersperses periods of part-time work with periods of unemployment. This is particularly true of those school-leavers who have special needs, including the Deaf.

Even those students who have strong educational achievements find it difficult to pursue their academic and career aspirations in an environment that is often inimical to their ambitions. Deaf students still encounter barriers to access to tertiary education and there is inequity in the opportunities and services provided at that level of the education system. McLeish (2010) found that while tertiary level institutions express a willingness to accommodate the Deaf, they were not equipped to facilitate inclusion in their regular classrooms—they did not have interpreters or other assistive technologies, and lecturers were not trained in techniques of inclusion. In order to benefit from the same level of instruction available in tertiary

[24] Both the schools and the MOE noted that Deaf students tend to perform better in subjects that are not language-based.

institutions, a Deaf student is required to expend more than what is required of a hearing student. A Deaf/Hard of Hearing student without financially capable parents will not have the necessary sponsorship to assure full communication access. Globally, responsibility is currently placed on post-secondary institutions to respond to the needs of Deaf/Hard of Hearing students once they have fulfilled the relevant requirements to enter these institutions. However, locally, students have to underwrite the cost of any special services that are needed to enable their inclusion in tertiary institutions. Furthermore, there is insufficient access to grants, scholarships or sponsorships for these individuals once accepted into a tertiary or skills-training institution.

The University of the West Indies (UWI) has an Office of Special Student Services, which provides services and support for all students with disabilities who are registered at the university. This has led the Director for the Centre for Disability Studies to describe the UWI as the most 'disability friendly tertiary institution in the Caribbean' (personal communication, July 20, 2015). Once a person who is deaf/hard of hearing matriculates to the university, and had indicated their impairment on their application form, they are referred to the Centre for support. In the case of the Deaf, this support may take the form of note takers, who will take notes on their behalf. The Centre also informs lecturers of the special need and request that they make the necessary accommodations for the student (Personal communication, July 20, 2015). This accommodation may be speaking clearly while facing the class or providing the notes electronically. To date, the Centre has not had to provide sign language interpreters for Deaf students, as 'the Deaf students here are those who did not learn JSL. Many have assistive devices, and do not need much support in class' (ibid). Additionally, students communicate directly with lecturers and make arrangements to receive the notes electronically. The Centre also noted that few persons who are deaf use their facilities, and they are not sure if this is deliberate, or a reflection of how few Deaf students are actually enrolled at the university.

Despite these claims, one parent indicated that she had to incur significant cost to have her Deaf daughter educated at the UWI, as there was no provision of special services to assist her. The family hired their own interpreter, and the mother at times, served as the note taker.

No other tertiary institution, including Teachers' and Community Colleges[25], and the other universities, indicated that they had special provision for Deaf students. This is despite the fact the University of Technology has developed a software—with funding from the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ)—to assist Deaf students improve their performance in English Language. The idea for the software was driven by a desire to assist Deaf students to matriculate to university. Recognizing that the main impediment to that matriculation was the level of qualifications, the university decided, as part of its corporate social responsibility, to begin working on computer software that would help Deaf persons master the English Language. Through this mastery, it was felt that they could better access content in other subject areas, and therefore improve their all round academic performance. This software caters to students at different levels of mastery, beginning with an introduction to simple concepts such as propositions, which are not used in JSL. From the basic level, students are then introduced to more complex sentences up to an advanced level of proficiency. The software also has video and text using JSL and also incorporates animation, games, and other interactive strategies to engage the students. The project is also being extended to provide computer tablets to students, and the use and effectiveness of the software will be evaluated in the research component of the project. Although the project now concentrates on LMG, to which the software will be made available for free, it is hoped that it will eventually extend to other schools for the Deaf.

[25] Although one informant found the community college at which she studied was very accommodating, and credits them with her successful completion of her Bachelors degree.

UTECH sees the ‘big benefit’ of this initiative as its potential to improve opportunities for the Deaf and assist in the integration of the Deaf in the economic and social development of Jamaica.

Box 2: The Tertiary Experience

In Grade 12, Caren's* teacher noticed changes in her pitch and her attentiveness in school. At the teacher's suggestion, Caren's family had her hearing tested, and it was confirmed that she was loosing her hearing. She completed her high school studies and enrolled in the University of Technology to pursue studies in business. By this time, she was severely hearing impaired, and indicated this to the university. However, nothing was done to facilitate her. In class, she was often sat silent, unable to completely hear the lecturer, or fully participate in the discussions. Through the generosity of classmates, she was able to borrow notes, as the lecturers, despite repeated requests, provided none for her. Nonetheless, she was able to complete the programme.

In pursuit of a second career, she returned to the institution to undertake further studies. By this time, she was using an assistive hearing device. However, she still had to sit at the front of every class, as it was difficult to hear the lecturers. Again, very little was done to facilitate her, although she indicated her profound hearing loss on every application form and spoke to all lecturers individually.

She has now moved on to the Norman Manley Law School (NMLS) where her experience is the same. She has told the School that she has only 17% hearing in one ear, but no special accommodations have been made for her, although some lecturers expressed an understanding and promised to 'try'. Only two lecturers are accommodating and use visuals for their classes. This makes a 'big difference, as she is able to take her own notes in those courses, and not feel as if she 'is always begging for notes' from her classmates.

In describing her tertiary experience, Caren points out that 'being in class was really challenging, I could not hear, and so did not see any real benefit from attending.' This has been even more onerous at NMLS, as there is a minimum attendance criterion, so she attends only to say she has been. The benefits from being present are few, as she is not able to fully participate in the class discussions, and ask questions of the lecturers due to the 'complexities of hearing loss'.

Overall, she believes that the 'oralist approach' to education delivery is a barrier to Deaf students at the tertiary level. She noted that 'persons do not use an equity-based approach to communications with the Deaf'; somehow there is always the view that accommodating Deaf students in a hearing classroom would be 'too expensive and inconvenient'.

*Interview July 31, 2015 * All names have been changed.*

Box 4: Overcoming Challenges

This parent noticed that her daughter at an early age—just after her 1st birthday—was having difficulty hearing. It was subsequently confirmed that the child, now 24 years old, was profoundly deaf in both ears. In the early 1990s, parents did not have the level of support that is available now, and so it was entirely up to her to inform herself about the options for educating her child.

She decided to send the child to JAD pre-school at about 2 years old. This was an important decision, as her daughter was able to make very good progress throughout her early childhood and primary years in the Deaf system. Though her child was profoundly deaf, this mother took the decision to send her child to a private hearing school for her secondary education. That school employed the services of an interpreter to facilitate her daughter and a handful of other Deaf students in attendance. Her daughter excelled, passing seven CSEC subjects.

However, so traumatic was her first attempt at accessing tertiary education, that this Deaf student had to receive counselling before she could make another attempt.

At her next school—the Open Campus of the University of the West Indies—she was more successful. This was largely due to the willingness of both students and faculty to facilitate her learning. This was done through the provision of written class notes and other material, alongside a private interpreter—paid for through loans—who attended classes. Often the mother herself attended classes and assisted to write the notes for her child.

Her daughter has successfully completed an Associate Degree in Social Work and is awaiting a decision on her application to Gallaudet University in Washington DC.

Interview April 29, 2015.

Box 3: Inaccessible Education Provision

In my knowledge, territory institutions within our area do not have any facilities for the Deaf. For example, we have some Deaf adults here who work alongside our teachers in the classrooms, and a lot of them would like to further their education, by doing CXC, etc. at Brown's Town Community College, but they are barred, because there [is] no interpreter, or [anybody] who can assist them. It should be noted that they are barred for two reasons 1) Jamaica does not have a lot of interpreters and 2) students would not be able to pay the interpreters to be in every class with them.

Principal of St. Christopher's School for the Deaf, St. Ann: Interview April, 15, 2015

In discussions[27], students expressed a desire to leave Jamaica in order to pursue their academic and career ambitions, as they were aware that Jamaica had no tertiary provision for the Deaf. All the FGD participants wanted to go to college to pursue various areas of study including communications, business management, accounts and banking. They noted that in the Jamaican post-secondary and tertiary institutions, there were no interpretation or other assistive services, and so they "would have to leave Jamaica to go to college"

While it is recognised that Deaf students should have access to skills-training alongside their academic provision, the schools report that, due to resource scarcity, they are unable to offer a wide range of skills options to their students. In May Pen, the only vocational

[27] Focus Group Discussion, March 31, 2015

options available are Food and Nutrition, and Clothing and Textiles, both offered with little resource support.[28] At the CCCD they also offer Food Preparation along with Information Technology (mostly data entry), and have in the past offered programmes in cosmetology, woodwork and sewing. In the absence of sustained programmes in vocational training, the students leave school with very little skills, and often with low educational attainment. Additionally, there are very few transition services available to students who attend the satellite schools, although they can access services on the main campus if they so choose, and can afford to do so.

[28] The May Pen Unit initiated a partnership with HEART, but although HEART was willing to donate some equipment, the school did not have the space to accommodate the gift.

Box 5: Tenacity and Support

Dawn was 13 years old, and a student at a prominent high school in her parish, when she contracted the mumps. Within three days she had completely lost her hearing. She suddenly moved from being a vivacious and popular first former, to being an outcast. Once she went deaf, no one at her school would speak to her, leaving her isolated and angry. She struggled to understand why her father and stepmother had not taken her seriously when she told them she was having difficulty hearing and why her friends had abandoned her because she was now deaf.

Despondent, she eventually asked her father to transfer her to the School for the Deaf in her parish, as she did not have the support to remain in a hearing school. Also, she thought that at the School for the Deaf, she would at least fit in socially. At home, her younger sister and cousin learnt JSL so they could communicate with her, but even now, after more than 15 years, her parents still do not sign.

Losing her hearing, and having to leave her prestigious school affected her self esteem, but eventually, she was able to accept her situation, particularly as she found a very supportive environment at her school. Having lost her hearing post language development, she was able to continue her studies without many difficulties, and her hope in a positive future was restored when she met a successful woman who was also deaf. She realized that she too could go to college and have a full and fulfilling life if she worked hard enough.

She did well at the School for the Deaf, which provided an extremely encouraging environment, and even convinced her father that she could be successful despite her deafness and therefore worthy of continued financial support.

However, having successfully matriculated to tertiary level, things became more difficult. At first, the institution was not supportive, refusing to help procure the services of an interpreter, and not making any special allowances for her in the classroom; they even refused to grant a deferral from the music requirement which was a part of her programme. But she persevered, and eventually a classmate organized a group of persons who because her support system. They took turns helping her with different subjects, helping her to write notes, and studying with her. This was a tremendous help and made it possible for her to get through the first year. Her teachers were largely unhelpful, despite the fact that she was studying for her qualifications in Deaf education. Pregnancy intervened, but after giving birth, she was determined to continue her studies, and returned to college after a few months and completed her studies.

She continued studying and received a Bachelors Degree in Deaf Education from Knox Community College. This was a completely different experience. Here, she was officially welcomed by the principal, and all her lecturers were extremely helpful, ensuring that she had printed materials. Her pre-hearing loss English Language mastery was extremely critical to her success, as was the willingness of fellow students and some lecturers to assist and provide printed material for her use.

Dawn is now married with a family and has a job she enjoys, fulfilling her early vision for her life.

Interview April 17, 2015

Box 6: Keys to Successful Transition

- Start early: Early language acquisition. Deaf children need to attend school as early as—if not earlier than —hearing children.
- Less absenteeism
- Strong parental support. Parents need to be convinced that their child has a real chance of success.
- Competent teachers
- Greater awareness in the hearing community of the needs and potential of the Deaf.
- A clear and consistent transition programme for all students
- Equitable access to post secondary and tertiary education and training.

Interview with JAD, January 16, 2015

Deaf people who have succeeded in accessing higher education make the same point about their classmates at the school for the Deaf; many have been unable to find sustainable livelihoods as they did not get the opportunity to achieve academically, or to develop a vocation. Dawn (Box 5) notes that many of her classmates are unemployed because they did not have the early educational opportunities she had as a hearing person with fully developed verbal and written English skills. She notes that it is "very hard to get a job without qualifications", and so very few are working, and the ones who are, work in stores and supermarkets, doing jobs that are well below their cognitive— though not education—levels. The gender differential is pronounced, as she notes that none of the girls are working, while a few of the boys have been able to find employment. This observation was echoed by a school administrator who was dismayed that "the girls just stay home and have babies, continuing the cycle of poverty" (personal communication April 17, 2015). Dawn notes too, that even those who had "qualifications" face discrimination in the labour force. To counter this discrimination she believes the government should lead by example by providing employment and the necessary accommodation for the Deaf who are qualified for different positions (personal communication, April 17, 2015).

Noting the difficulty Deaf students face in accessing post-secondary education and training, JAD has been involved in several initiatives with institutions such as the UWI, HEART, and Excelsior Community College, to establish partnerships that will facilitate easier access for its students. An attempt was made to establish a 'zero

Box 7: International Good Practices

To address labour market imperfections and encourage the employment of people with disabilities, many countries have laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability. Enforcing antidiscrimination laws is expected to improve access to the formal economy and have wider social benefits. Many countries also have specific measures, for example quotas, aiming to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation and employment services —job training, counselling, job search assistance, and placement—can develop or restore the capabilities of people with disabilities to compete in the labour market and facilitate their inclusion in the labour market. At the heart of all this is changing attitudes in the workplace

World Report on Disabilities, 2011:235

year', during which Deaf students would be allowed to study towards matriculation requirements. This has not been implemented due, in part, to the inability of a sufficient number of students to qualify for programme entry. UWI requires at least 10 persons in a cohort pursuing courses concentrated around a limited number of programmes for it to be economically feasible.

9. Employers' Perceptions and Workplace Experiences.

The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) "recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities" (article 27). Furthermore, the CRPD requires that state parties should ' safeguard and promote the realisation of the right to work', and prohibits all forms of employment discrimination, promotes access to vocational training and opportunities for self-employment, and calls for reasonable accommodation in the workplace. The Convention reiterates the right of PWDs to "just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value" (ibid). It also encourages states to employ PWDs in the public sector, and to "promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures" (ibid).

Recent data from JAD found that, inter alia, there are significant misconceptions among employers about the accommodations necessary to employ the Deaf, and

that these perceptions prevent organisations from offering job opportunities in certain areas to suitably qualified Deaf applicants (JAD, 2015). Employers, believing that accommodations for the integration of the Deaf will be costly, often do not consider the provision of these "special facilities financially feasible", or providing significant rates of return, even while expressing a willingness to employ persons with disabilities (Personal Communication, JEF, May 28, 2015). Many employers in the JAD study admitted to not being familiar with JSL or knowing that there are other ways of communicating with persons who are deaf. This unawareness is a major stumbling block to the transition of the Deaf. Students expressed a concern that being deaf may prevent them finding employment, even after college. They were aware of older colleagues who had left school and were unable to get jobs because some employers "think they can't do anything" (FGD, 2015). Admitting that they were "sometimes discouraged", they reasserted that they understood why it was difficult for some Deaf graduates to find jobs, but they believed that "it doesn't matter–if you are deaf, you can still elevate yourself, if you push" (ibid).

The students at the LMG indicated that they had mixed experiences on job placements. Students who had participated in the National Youth Service (NYS) job placement programmes reported satisfaction with their work environment and that they were "treated as normal" (FGD LMG, March 31). In fact, they reported that co-workers were interested in learning JSL (and had learnt aspects) and used various ways of communicating with them — using gestures and writing communication.

Students expressed the desire to have more transition emersion experiences so they can learn "how to manage out there" in the hearing world (FGD, March 2015)

Despite the generally negative experiences and perceptions, there is evidence that

Box 8: Negative Stereotype

Very few students who leave school qualified are able to get work. This is because Jamaica still has a negative stereotype attached to the Deaf; we still believe that a Deaf person would not be able to perform at the same level as their hearing colleagues. This is not to say that all Deaf persons are literate; many Deaf persons may be still performing at a grade three level or below, which means that communication will be more challenging because you can't talk to them or write to them, so a boss would not want to employ that person. What you find is that they are really skilled with their hands, so once you show them they will be able to function.

Principal of St. Christopher's School for the Deaf: Interview April 15, 2015

suggests that employers are open to employing the Deaf and have had positive experiences from having done so. A leading hotel chain is reported to have introduced an internship programme that the Deaf participates in, and have hired some of the Deaf participants on a full-time basis. It has since reported a high level of satisfaction with their work ethic and skills (personal communication, June 17, 2015). Large manufacturing companies have also hired the Deaf, and continue to provide employment to persons in the Deaf community. Even those who have never employed the Deaf have expressed a willingness to do so.

Box 9: Facing Discrimination in the Workplace

"I never got promoted. But others got promoted who were there as long as I had been. My pay never changed. Someone went on holiday and then they realized I actually had the skills, so they would substitute me for other people even though they saw that I could do it. Hearing people could become seniors, but not a Deaf person."

"....they feel the Deaf person is limited in communication if they rise to a certain level"

It seems to me if the Deaf person has proven themselves in other areas outside of their specific job responsibilities, then they should be promoted. They think the hearing person is more versatile.

Janet Morrison (May 2015) Deafness and the World of Work. JAD Report

The study on Deafness and the Workplace (Morrison, 2015) quotes a prospective employer: "I think Deaf people could definitely be incorporated into our culture. I told my former HR [Manager] over a year ago to find some people to employ but she didn't seem to know where to go" (Morrison 2015: 17).

Some employers are new to the recruitment of the Deaf, while others have been doing it successfully for many years (Box 10).

Box 10: Just show them….

Through his company, he is the single largest private sector employer of PWDs. You get the distinct feeling from both him and his HR Manager that employing Deaf persons was "much ado about nothing". They don't see it as any different from employing hearing persons, nor do they have problems communicating with the Deaf—"you just show them what you want them to do, and they do it", he said with a shrug.

His Deaf employees have worked in various positions in many aspects of his businesses, from packaging and administration, to woodwork, spraying and off-site supermarket merchandising, "like regular workers", he says. They have never felt the need for an interpreter. The HR Manager (Miss B) revealed that she has picked up some sign language along the way, but gestures and writing are the main methods of communication with Deaf employees. Both she and the CEO feel that they make the best workers. "There is less skylarking and chatting", he says with an impish look on his face.

Morrison, 2015:15

Other employers, working with the Expanding to the Deaf programme being undertaken by Junior Achievement of Jamaica since 2012, through their Work Readiness Forum for Human Resource (HR) managers, have indicated their willingness to employ persons who are deaf (personal communication, June 17, 2015). The major concerns about Deaf integration have surrounded issues of communication. Would their staff have to learn JSL? If not, how can they communicate with a Deaf member of staff? Would that person be able to comprehend simple instructions, or to operate at the level needed for the job? Once provided with information and evidence that the Deaf can be successfully incorporated into a variety of work place situations, the Human Resource managers have taken a different perspective on what is needed to recruit from among the Deaf. They now understand that employing persons who are deaf does not require the presence of an interpreter at all times, and that some relatively simple inclusion techniques—communicating in writing, being visible when communicating—can be used in the workplace.

9.1. Work Readiness Preparation and Labour Market Responsiveness in Jamaica

The work readiness preparation for the labour market absorption of the Deaf has to take place on two fronts, preparing the students, and preparing the employers.

Preparation of the student takes place in schools. This is critical as, though there are employers who report positive experiences with employees who are deaf or hard of hearing, there are reports of very negative workplace attitudes among the Deaf. The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD) report that they have received complaints from employers about the work ethic of the Deaf. The complaints centre on issues such as punctuality, and interpersonal conflicts (personal communication, June 15, 2015). The JCPD notes, however, that at times, upon investigation, these complaints stem from differences in the culture and assumptions of the Deaf and hearing individuals, and are exacerbated by the barriers in communication.

The JAD uses the general Guidance curriculum as the base of its workplace readiness activities in what is described as a 'fairly informal system'. Recognising however, that 'so much more needs to be covered' (personal communication, June 17, 2015), JAD is now developing a more structured approach to its transition services. With funding from the Social and Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities Project under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), JAD is now able to implement significant changes to its transition services. Among those changes are:

a. Development of a more structured database and tracking system. The new data base will provide information on student qualifications, areas of employment in which students enter, and length of time to get a job. It will also include data which will help to build a profile of students, including their academic progress, and interests.
b. The implementation of a Communications Plan, which will be designed to address 'issues on the ground'. Included among these issues will be the perception of employers, on which the recently concluded study provided data which has given JAD a 'better idea of how to approach' the issue. The

Communications strategy will be wide ranging, and geared towards developing in the public, a better understanding and greater appreciation of what it means to be deaf.

c. Development of a curriculum for a Work Readiness Skills programme. This will address basic skills such as social integration and English Language mastery.

The current transition process includes the following steps/activities:

- The hosting of different Career Day events to showcase the products and vocational work of the students. These sessions also include talks/ discussions with persons who are deaf who have successfully found employment, and who are seen as role models in the Deaf community.
- An annual survey of the Grades 10, 11, and 12 students. This survey is designed to collect data on their areas of interest, future plans, and aspirations.
- Identification of appropriate internships for the students. The National Youth Service programme is one source of such internships, as the programme rules state that at least 10 per cent of participants should be PWDs. Interns have been placed in private sector companies in the areas of manufacturing and hospitality.
- Development of relationships with employers: In order to place students, the unit develops relationships with employers in areas in which students have expressed an interest. Consequently, the JAD has built relationships with at least two of the large manufacturing companies in Jamaica. Both these companies now have persons who are deaf in their employ.

The Transition Services Unit has been making 'stronger connections' (ibid) with HEART, as students have expressed particular interests in the Cosmetology and Early Childhood Education Programmes. The integration of students in regular HEART programmes, is one of the main objectives of the Unit. The Unit has also begun a relationship with Excelsior Community College, which is now exploring the

feasibility of offering programmes for the Deaf. Other partners include the Junior Achievement Programme, which although working more closely with LMG, also works with JAD to help prepare students for the transition to work.

One of the issues identified in the Deaf population is the frequency of movement between jobs which extends the time within which students' employment stabilises. Hence, it is intended that the transitions services will also be available to persons already in the workforce, and working, but still encounter difficulties making a successful transition to stable workplace performance and employment.

Although some organisations are still wary, with the advent of the concept of corporate social responsibility, more organisations are open to employing disabled persons, including those who are deaf. Nevertheless, JAD recognises that there are still serious legitimate concerns which employers still have. Among these is the issue of safety, particularly in workplaces in which heavy industrial machine is used, or where processes require constant oral communication.

Abilities Foundation

The work of the JAD is complemented by the work readiness initiative at the Abilities Foundation (AF). The mission of AF is 'is to provide quality vocational education to Persons with Disabilities to enable them to function as creative and productive citizens." Established in 1992, AF is a registered Training institution with HEART/NTA, which specializes in providing training in vocational skills for the PWD. Being registered with HEART allows it to offer certification in several complete programmes, as well as in Unit competencies.[30] In addition to training in vocational skills, it also offers a basic academic programme, concentrating on literacy and numeracy. Other programmes are Life Skills, which focuses on the trainees' transition to the work force, and money awareness and money management. Job coaching and job placement are also offered free of cost to students at the completion of their training (Abilities Foundation 2014 Review).

[30] This means that it can certify participants in complete multi-unit programmes, as well as in specific units of a programme.

The main objectives of the programme are to: [31]

a. to offer market-driven vocational education to persons with disabilities, for the development of marketable skills
b. to improve employment opportunities by forging links with other national agencies, for further training and job enhancement
c. to teach young adults with disabilities good work ethics, and to facilitate their social and emotional re-adjustment to ensure effective integration into the wider society
d. to establish a vocational resource center capable of providing technical information and offering practical assistance to persons with disabilities, as well as to potential employers.

In 2014 the programmes offered (AF 2014 Review) were:

- Housekeeping
- Furniture Making
- Data Operations Level 1
- Design and Decor/Soft Furnishing
- Horticulture and Landscaping

Three of these courses, Housekeeping, Data Operations Level 1, Level 2, and Furniture Making lead to the National Vocational of Jamaica (NVQ-J) Level 1. These are facilitated through partnership with Heart Trust/NTA.

Although in existence for 23 years, AF has struggled with funding, and over the years, has not been able to cater to as many persons as demanded the service. Since 2013 however, it has received support of J$6 383 000.00 from the MLSS through the Social and Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities Project, and has been able to expand its services to the disabled community, and strengthen its own capacity to deliver these services. In addition to the training programme, AF now

[31] http://www.abilitiesfoundation.org.jm/AF.htm accessed August 6, 2015

provides financial aid for the acquisition of assistive devices. It also now has the resources to track students for up to one year after they have been placed in a job.

The Foundation reports that it has had an increase in the number of the Deaf accessing their service since 2012 (personal communication, July 30, 2015). The reasons for this are unclear[32], there are now 10 Deaf enrolled in the programme, and there has been increased interest from the community as a whole. The main areas of focus for Deaf students are data processing, furniture making, and housekeeping. In addition to increased interest, there has also been an improvement in the readiness of the Deaf students entering the programme. In recent time Deaf students have been able to finish the programme in 15 months, especially now that they have the assistance of on-site interpretive service (made possible by the MLSS funding). AF is also trying to procure speech-to-text technology, and to have its more member of staff trained in JSL—at present about 20.0 per cent are—to allow the programme to fully facilitate its Deaf students.

This improvement in readiness is also reflected in the feedback from the employers with whom they are placed. Many have high praises for the students/interns, and consequently, AF has been able to secure summer employment for most of its Deaf students. In 2014/15, there were five Deaf in the programme, and all have been placed in jobs. Interestingly, the Foundation pointed out that while many employers are open to hiring the Deaf, many indicate that they prefer for them to be placed in pairs, creating a friendlier social environment for each other. However, there is challenge finding job placements for the more mature Deaf (those over 25 years). These students cannot be placed through the NYS, and the Foundation is now trying to have them placed through the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP).

AF has also partnered with Digicel Foundation to renovate its furniture making facilities, and has been involved in the effort by Digicel to increase the number of special needs persons on its staff. This is seen as part of a 'current climate, which is

[32] AF speculates that this may be attributed to passing by 'word of mouth' of information about the programmes and their improved capacity to facilitate the Deaf.

Box 11
Digicel: The POWER Programme

Digicel, one of Jamaica's leading Telecommunications companies initiated in August 2014, a programme geared at increasing the number of PWDs in their Workforce. Called Providing Opportunities for a Workforce that is Enabled and Resilient (POWER). This programme provides internships for PWDs, with a view to their eventual integration in the workforce if warranted by their performance. Once hired, persons are given the same tasks as anyone else at that level, and are expected to meet the same standards as anyone else in the organisation.

Five persons from the original batch of interns are now employed full time to the company. Their integration is made possible through the company's commitment to provide all the necessary accommodations to ensure that the PWD can perform at the standard expected of them.

Although the first batch of interns did not include anyone who was deaf, the company expects to provide opportunities to the Deaf in the 2015 group. Having recently (May 2015) participated in the Junior Achievement Job Readiness of the Deaf seminar for Human Resource Managers, the Company has shortlisted some Deaf students from Abilities Foundation participation in the programme. The only barrier to the inclusion of the Deaf may be their level of qualifications. Basic eligibility requirement is passes in five subjects at the CSEC, a factor which may eliminate many who may be otherwise considered.

Digicel is committed to providing any type of accommodation that may be needed to facilitate the inclusion of the Deaf. They are even considering providing JSL training for all interested members of staff, and are prepared to offer assistive aids where possible.

Though there are no Deaf persons currently on staff, the company employs someone who is hard of hearing and who has worked there for years. Everyone understands that it is important to speak directly to her hearing ear and provide information in a written form.

The company intends to continue the POWER internship as a strategy to build a diverse workforce, which includes the Deaf.

favourable to the inclusion of persons with disabilities' (AF Review 2014), and which the Foundation hopes will be inured to the benefit of PWDs.

Despite these improvements, the Foundation is acutely aware that there is far more which needs to be done to facilitate the full integration of Deaf into the workplace. The situation is described as 'tough' especially for the girls, who are seen as "extremely vulnerable to exploitation" (personal communication, July 30, 2015. This issue was raised by all the service providers; the women who are deaf are less likely to find meaningful employment when they leave school, and so end up having children, thereby reinforcing their disadvantage.

Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf

Other organisations such as the Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf (CCCD) also provide some job readiness preparation and employment opportunities for the Deaf. In fact, the CCDC Deaf Village in Manchester is built around the concept that the Deaf, in the right environment, can live independent, and socially and economically vibrant lives. The village houses residences, a

church— pastored by a Deaf pastor and a factory that manufactures furniture. They are also completing a multipurpose conference and retreat facility, which will also provide employment for the Deaf. Livestock is also reared in the village.

The CCCD operates a residential school for Deaf students from across Jamaica. They currently enroll approximately 160 students in three locations; an estimated 75 in Mandeville, 30 in Montego Bay, and 60 in Kingston. Once student have completed the academic and vocational programme, they are referred to the AF, NYS, or the Junior Achievement for further preparation for the workplace. The Centre has partnered with Junior Achievement for the last two years to host the job readiness seminar for transitioning students. This provides an opportunity for the students to interact with potential employers and receive 'real-world' advice on the protocols for operating in an organisation. Due to its emphasis on school-to-work transition, the Centre, working with its partners, tries to place graduates from the food preparation programme. They have been able to find employment in the hospitality industry, data processing, construction, and farming.

Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities

The Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JDPD) has also indicated that they get occasional requests from companies for the placement of the Deaf, as many are very hard working, and make a good impression on employers. Although the JCPD has responsibility to work with companies to design and implement an inclusion policy, they do not currently have the capacity to undertake this activity.

Box 12: The Journey to Employment Stability

She can't remember when she lost her hearing, but knows it was at a very young age—2 or 3 years old. Dionne attended both the Danny Williams and Lister Mair Gilby Schools, leaving LMG in 1992. Upon leaving school, she had no CSEC passes and was unable to find a job. After more than a year, she found a job in the garment industry, working as a trimmer. After being there for 1 year, the company closed, and she was again without a job. While unemployed, she was 'frustrated and depressed', and felt like giving up. She wanted to get a job to help secure her future and contribute to her family, as she had gotten married and had a child. The biggest obstacle she faced was that companies did not want to hire someone who was deaf, as they said they could not communicate with her. It took her more than 3 years to find another job, the one she now has at a government agency catering to the disabled community. She has been there for over 15 years.

Although she has been encouraged many times to go back to school and improve her qualifications, she hasn't done so, mainly because of the inconvenience of having to return to LMG for evening classes as there is nowhere else which provides CSEC classes for the Deaf. She recognises that she needs to upgrade her qualifications and intends to do so, as she loves her job, and would not want to be unemployed again because of a lack of qualification.

She notes that Deaf women have a particularly hard time finding employment and many end up having children who they cannot help to support financially. She recalls friends who went on to become certified with HEART but have not been able to get jobs. This she says is the result of a combination of discrimination in the workforce and lack of support at home. Some parents are fearful for their children because they are deaf and become very protective, even stifling. This leads to demotivation and a loss of a sense of independence.

The difference in her life has been the very firm support she had from her family, especially her mother who was very active at the schools she attended. She also taught her sister JSL, as well as some of her friends. As a result, she never felt isolated and alone.

She does not believe that her education prepared her for work. There was minimal work experience, and there was no real guidance on how to fit in a hearing organisation or 'how it would be to work', only some 'tips' on how to dress, being punctual etc. Some other important aspects of working were never explained such as disciplinary measures or how to relate to supervisors.

She believes that with more public education, parents will send their Deaf child to school earlier, thus improving their chances of academic success. This will help the Deaf to access 'the same jobs as everyone else', which is all they ask.

9.2. Employers Perception of Hiring the Deaf

The Disabilities Act bars employers from discriminating against a person with a disability who is otherwise qualified for employment unless this can be justified. This legal protections for PWDs are important in helping to secure employment opportunities for the Deaf, and so too are the perceptions and experiences of employers working with the Deaf.

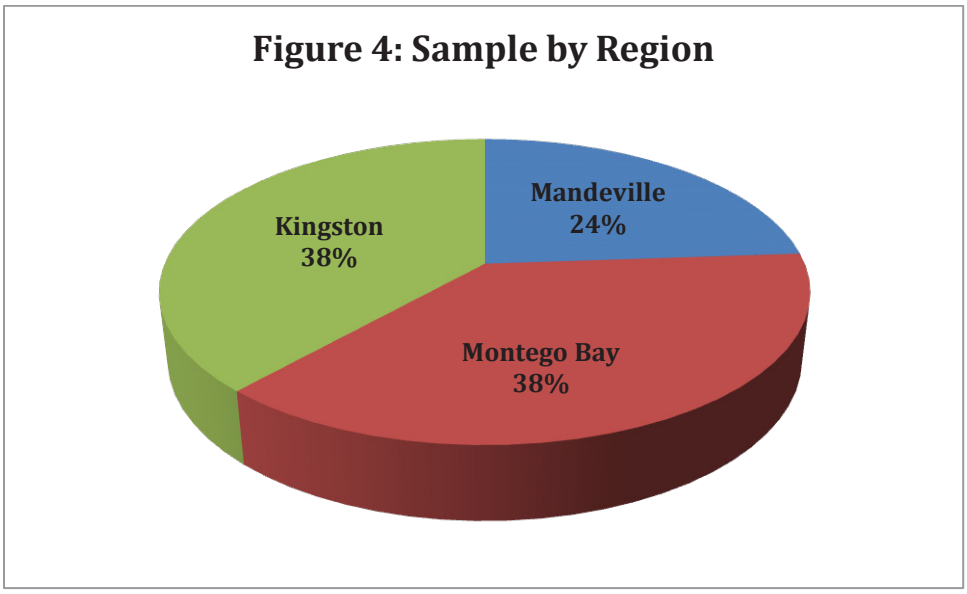
The survey of employers undertaken for this study presents some insights in these perceptions. The sample for the survey was 180 firms in Kingston, Mandeville and Montego Bay. A total of 159 responded. Table 10 shows the industries covered by the survey and the number in each region.

Table 10: Survey Sample by Industry Type and Region

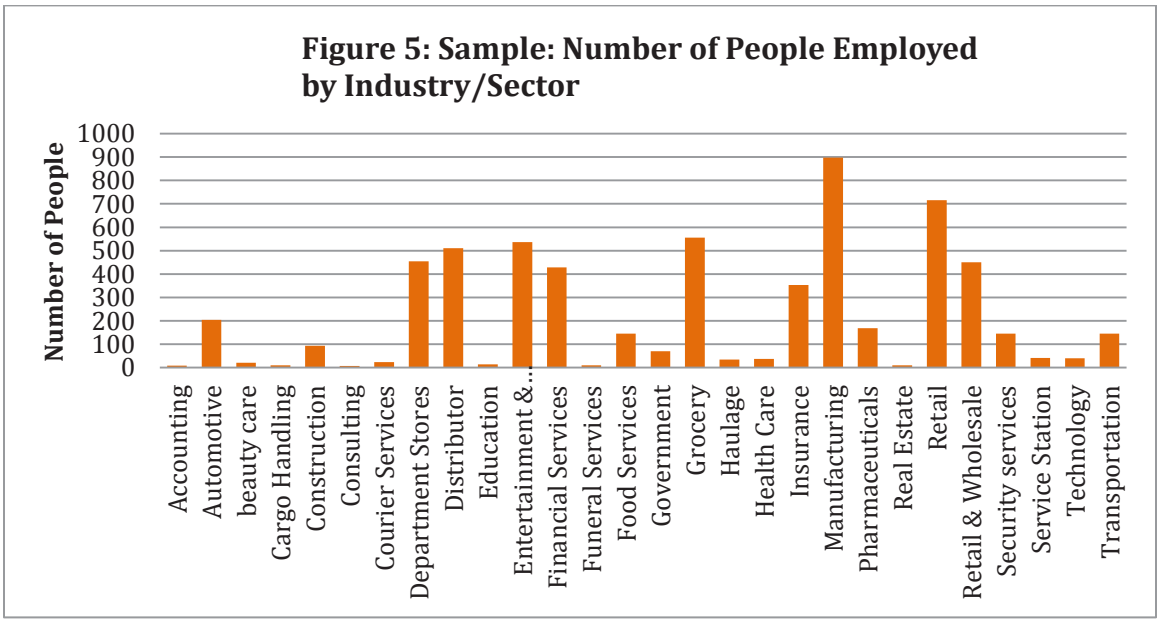
Industry Type by Region			
Industries	**Mandeville**	**Montego Bay**	**Kingston**
Accounting	0	1	0
Automotive	1	13	2
Cargo Handling	0	2	0
Consulting	0	2	0
Financial Services	2	0	2
Construction	1	3	1
Department Stores	4	2	2
Education	1	0	0
Entertainment & Leisure	1	3	4
Financial Services	2	0	2
Grocery	3	2	5
Government	0	1	0
Health Care	1	1	1
Manufacturing	0	1	7
Pharmaceuticals	1	1	3
Retail & Wholesale	0	3	1
Retail	3	13	18
Service Station	1	0	0
Transportation	0	2	1
Food Services	1	5	2
Insurance	1	0	2
Beauty care	1	0	0
Courier Services	1	0	0
Repair	0	0	0
Haulage	0	1	0
Security services	0	1	2
Distributor	0	0	6
Technology	0	0	2

This wide-ranging sample was selected to ensure that the perceptions captured were spread across a diversity of industries/sectors. Figure 4 shows that 38.0 per

cent of the sample came from Kingston and Montego Bay, respectively and 24.0 per cent from Mandeville.



Together, the respondent organisations employed 48 147 persons (Table 11 and Figure 5).



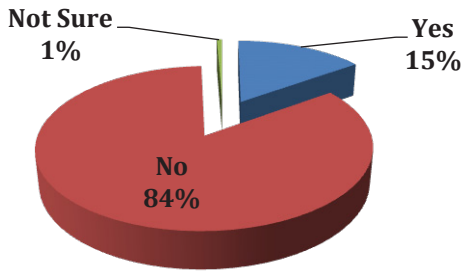
Activities were largely concentrated in retail trade, including grocery sales, and general distribution. Entertainment and leisure activities, financial services, and manufacturing were also well represented in the sample.

Table 11: Industries in Sample by the Number of Persons Employed.

Industries	Number employed
Accounting	8
Automotive	204
Beauty care	21
Cargo Handling	10
Construction	93
Consulting	7
Courier Services	23
Department Stores	455
Distributor	510
Education	14
Entertainment & Leisure	536
Financial Services	428
Funeral Services	10
Food Services	145
Government	70
Grocery	556
Haulage	35
Health Care	37
Insurance	353
Manufacturing	898
Pharmaceuticals	168
Real Estate	10
Retail	716
Retail & Wholesale	450
Security services	145
Service Station	41
Technology	40
Transportation	145

Only 15.0 per cent of respondents reported ever having employed someone who was deaf, 84.0 per cent had never done so, and 1.0 per cent was unsure (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Have You Ever Employed Someone Who Is Deaf?

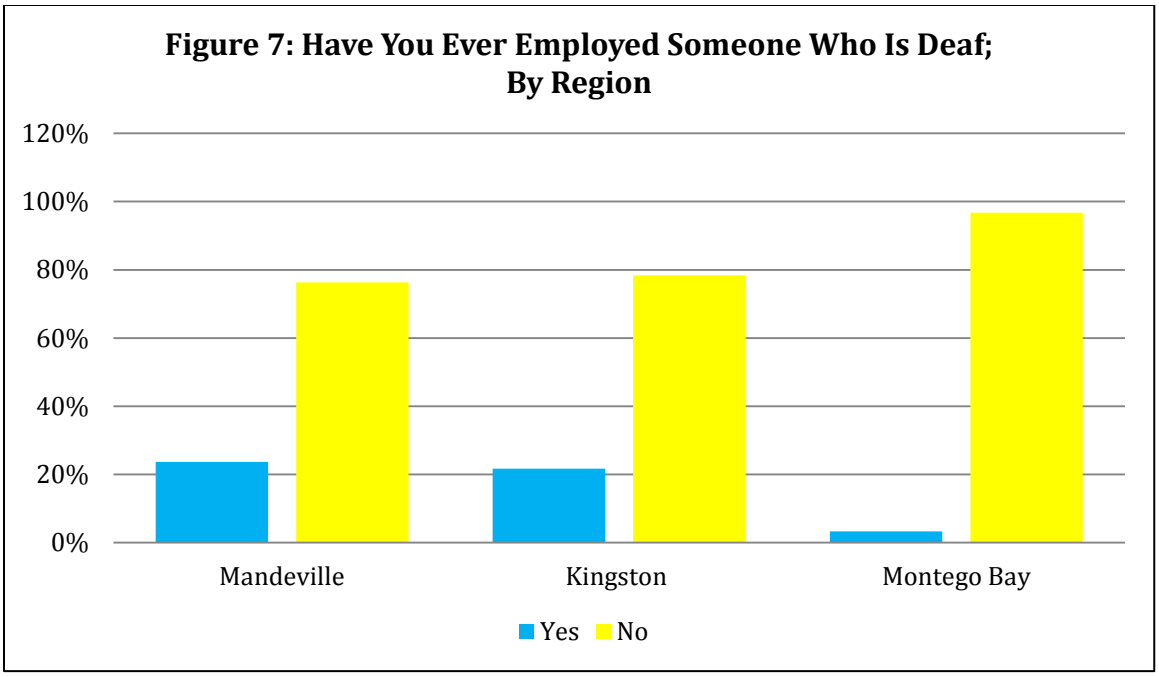


There was variability among regions in the proportion of companies that had experience employing the Deaf. The industries in which the Deaf found employment are listed in Table 12. Of the 24 companies that provided employment for the Deaf, 58.0 per cent were in the grocery (7), retail (4), and manufacturing industries (3).

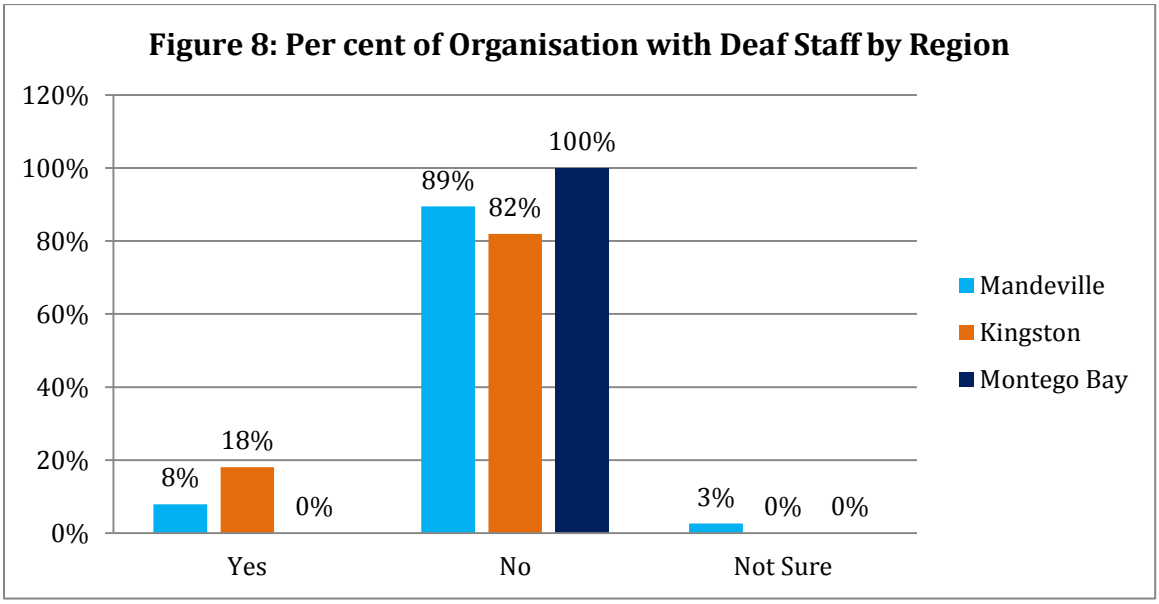
Table 12: Industries Employing the Deaf, 2015

Employment of the Deaf by Industry	Number of Organisations Employing the Deaf
Automotive	2
Department Stores	2
Grocery	7
Manufacturing	3
Pharmaceuticals	1
Retail & Wholesale	1
Retail	4
Insurance	1
Distributor	2
Technology	1

While approximately 20.0 per cent of the employers in Mandeville and Kingston reported having hired someone who is deaf, less than 5.0 per cent of those in Montego Bay had done so (Figure 7).



Fewer respondents (9.0 per cent) had someone who is deaf currently working with them. Examined by region, 18.0 per cent in Kingston currently employed the Deaf, and 8.0 per cent in Mandeville. None of the establishments surveyed in Montego Bay currently had a Deaf staff member (Figure 8).



Only 19.0 per cent of respondents reported ever having worked alongside someone who is deaf, with 25.0 per cent of those in Kingston having done so, and 13.0 per

cent in Mandeville and Montego Bay. For those who had, 83.0 per cent report that it was a positive experience, although 13.0 per cent viewed it as negative, and 4.0 per cent were ambivalent. For those who considered it a positive experience, the main reasons given was that the Deaf are cooperative, hard working, fit in with co-workers, and help to communicate with Deaf customers. They note that Deaf workers do excellent work, met deadlines, and the customers report a high level of satisfaction with their work. Employers made statements such as:

- *"Her performance is great; she is leading in her area of work."*
- *"They were very normal and attentive and work efficient."*
- "*The skill she has acquired while working has been valuable to the business."*

There were, however, respondents who reported having a negative experience working with the Deaf. Comments included

- *"Customers did not realize he was deaf and thought he was being rude,"*
- *"People tended to be impatient with their disposition,"*
- *"Based on the nature of the business there is little that a Deaf person can do,"*
- *"Staff wasn't able to communicate with them."*

This reinforces the point that some of the issues which act as barriers to the successful employment of the Deaf stem from a lack of understanding, and the deficits in their environment, rather than directly related to their abilities.

In assessing employers' perception of hiring the Deaf, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1–5 (1 being strongly agree), their response to a series of questions. Table 13 presents the findings.

Over 80.0 per cent strongly agreed or agreed that the Deaf are just as capable as those who can hear. Approximately 25.0 per cent felt that hiring the Deaf may be stressful, and another 21.0 per cent were unsure if this would be, with 54.0 per cent disagreeing. Only 8.0 per cent felt that hiring someone who was deaf would make their staff uncomfortable, and 16.0 per cent felt that it would be difficult to build a team with a member who was deaf. Over 40.0 per cent conceded that they do not

know how to communicate with the Deaf, although 62.0 per cent reported that they would be happy to hire someone who is deaf, as long as they are qualified.

The data show that employers are open to the idea of hiring the Deaf, even though the majority (84.0 per cent) have never employed someone who is hearing impaired. There was almost universal (94.0 per cent) agreement that the Deaf should be given the same opportunities as everyone else. It is important to note though, that there seems to be general uncertainty about what working with the Deaf really means. When asked for an opinion on whether the organisation could afford the adjustments needed to hire someone who is deaf, 34.0 per cent said they were not sure. The uncertainty is also seen around issues such as whether a Deaf worker would slow down the team (19.0 per cent unsure), if staff would feel uncomfortable working with the Deaf (19.0 per cent unsure), or if employing the Deaf would be stressful (21.0 per cent unsure), and whether hiring a Deaf person would slow productivity (20.0 per cent unsure). Although there is a preponderance of support for the idea that the Deaf should be offered the same opportunities as other, 27.0 per cent were unsure if they would hire someone who is deaf if they are qualified.

Table 13: Perceptions of Employers

Questions		n	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Q7.1	I think the Deaf are just as capable as those who can hear	159	19%	62%	6%	13%	0%	100 %
Q7.2	People who are deaf would find it difficult to work here	159	8%	37%	14%	36%	4%	100 %
Q7.3	Employing people who are deaf would be too stressful	159	2%	23%	21%	46%	8%	100 %
Q7.4	People who are deaf cannot work here because no one would understand them	159	1%	26%	15%	50%	8%	100 %
Q7.5	My staff would feel uncomfortable if a Deaf person joins the staff	159	0%	8%	19%	57%	16%	100 %
Q7.6	It's too hard building a team with people who are deaf	159	0%	16%	17%	56%	11%	100 %
Q7.7	A Deaf person would get left behind in this organization	159	2%	18%	17%	52%	11%	100 %
Q7.8	A Deaf worker would slow us down	159	1%	21%	19%	49%	11%	100 %
Q7.9	We would be less productive if a Deaf person were on staff	159	0%	13%	20%	50%	17%	100 %

Q7.10	I do not know how to communicate with a Deaf person	159	7%	34%	11%	43%	5%	100 %
Q7.11	I don't have time to learn how to communicate with a Deaf person	159	1%	15%	10%	60%	14%	100 %
Q7.12	This organisation cannot afford the adjustments needed to hire the Deaf	159	1%	16%	34%	40%	9%	100 %
Q7.13	Deaf people can only do manual labour	159	0%	2%	11%	62%	26%	100 %
Q7.14	It makes no sense hiring a Deaf person, they couldn't do the job	159	0%	11%	13%	56%	21%	100 %
Q7.15	The work here is too technical for Deaf people	159	3%	19%	6%	55%	18%	100 %
Q7.16	I would be happy to hire Deaf people as long as they are qualified	159	16%	46%	27%	10%	1%	100 %
Q7.17	Deaf people should be given the same opportunities as others	159	31%	62%	6%	1%	1%	100 %

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The evidence shows that there is an institutional framework to facilitate the inclusion of the Deaf in Jamaica, but this framework is not strong enough to meet the workforce preparation needs of the Deaf. Despite the anti-discrimination provisions in the Disabilities Act, the Deaf still report that they are often stigmatized, and even when qualified, find it hard to find non-menial employment. Additionally, there are some protections that have not yet been implemented such as the Social Protection Strategy and the Special Education Policy, which make provision for the design and execution of a structured transition programme for all PWDS.

Jamaica has been providing education for the Deaf for over 70 years, with direct government support for 40 years. Despite this long history of Deaf education, the Deaf still struggle to become fully integrated in the labour force during adulthood. This is due to weaknesses in the quality of the education to which they have access, and the resultant poor academic outcomes. These poor outcomes do not only reflect the quality of education offered in the schools for the Deaf, but also the failure of parents to seek early interventions once their children are diagnosed as being deaf. Without early language acquisition and stimulation, Deaf children will continue to fall behind their hearing peers in school, with consequences that are carried into

their work life. Those Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons, who manage to escape the pattern of underachievement, are those who either lost their hearing at a later age, or who had the benefit of activist parents who sought the best care and education possible.

Questions also surround the overall qualifications of teachers who teach the Deaf. Notwithstanding the fact that teachers in the schools for the Deaf are qualified at the tertiary level, their fitness-for-purpose is undermined by their non-mastery of JSL. Mastery of JSL is one of the keys to effectively teach the Deaf, but the Ministry of Education does not require this of teachers in these schools.

Some Deaf students excel and are able to matriculate to postsecondary and tertiary institutions. However, once enrolled at these institutions, they face severe challenges fully accessing the education being offered, as there is very little focus on accommodating Deaf students at this level. The accommodations are ad hoc and discretionary, with students having to negotiate directly with lecturers to ensure that their needs are taken into account. The result is that the classroom experience of the Deaf varies from lecturer to lecturer, as these institutions have no standard mandatory procedures (developed by individual institutions or nationally) to facilitate Deaf students.

The Deaf experience in labour market transition and participation, though more severe, mirrors the general experience of young people in Jamaica—high levels of unemployment, employment instability, and employment in low skill occupation, particularly if education attainment and skills levels are low. While there are several active efforts to enable the school to work transition of the Deaf, the programmes are not as robust or as structured as needed. None of these programmes currently have a comprehensive database on important transition issues such as eventual qualifications, areas of employment, and length of time seeking a job. Few have the resources to monitor the progress of students once they leave an institution and begin seeking jobs.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, perceptions of employers suggest that the labour market is conducive to the acceptance of the Deaf as potentially valuable team

members. Employers express belief that the Deaf are just as capable and should be given the same rights as everyone else, but they are uncertain as to the full implications of employing someone who is deaf. Although willing to employ the Deaf, this uncertainty may continue to act as a barrier to their actual employment of the Deaf.

Recommendations:

Securing opportunities for sustainable and productive employment for the Deaf will require efforts on three fronts: the family, the school, and in the labour market. The family is a critical component as it has been seen that when children who are deaf have early support, they achieve at a higher level than those who do not. Improving the quality of education, through inter alia, enhancements in teacher fitness-for-purpose, is also necessary to improve student qualifications, which will equip the Deaf to access expanded opportunities in the labour force. Providing employers with information on the implications of employing a Deaf team member and assistance to implement inclusive workplace practices, are also crucial in this effort. Against this background, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Design and execute a highly visible behaviour change campaign to reinforce the potential of the Deaf. This campaign will include elements that target both parents and the wider public. The aspect for parents should focus on the fact that a productive life is possible even with hearing loss and information should be provided about the education, and livelihood opportunities available to their children. For the wider public, it should be reinforced, using persons who are deaf as examples, that being deaf, while an impairment, does not make you incapable of functioning in the workplace or school. Medical information regarding the leading causes of hearing loss and ways to prevent them should also be a vital part of this campaign, as should the importance of early screening and intervention in ensuring that hearing loss is minimized. Where not preventable, parents should be made aware of the

key role early stimulation plays in facilitating language development, desirable education outcomes, and a sustainable livelihood.

2. Apply the principle of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and reconsider the exclusive use of segregated schools for education of students who are deaf. Although a Deaf Unit exists at one public primary school, there is no structured system to allow the Deaf to be mainstreamed into hearing schools. Where parents would prefer this option, they have to underwrite the cost of any interpretative services or other accommodations at hearing schools.

   Even those students who attended hearing schools prior to becoming deaf find it difficult to continue once hearing is lost, and opt instead to move to a school for the Deaf. Where children who are deaf can access education in their own communities, access would increase, and they would enjoy the academic and socialisation benefits which come with being in an integrated environment. This can also assist in smoothing the school to work pathway, as students would be fully socialized in the culture of a hearing society. It is recognised that the implementation of this recommendation will require the commitment of resources to train both teachers and interpreters to facilitate students in non-segregated environments. However, in order to control cost, consideration can be given to having two or three primary and at least one secondary school per parish equipped to facilitate the Deaf. This would be in addition to the existing schools for the Deaf. It is important to note that the intent of LRE is that the student be included in the general education classroom as often as possible. This could mean that Deaf students pursue some studies separately from the general class, and others on a fully integrated basis. Hence, Deaf students could engage in IT, Visual Arts, Dancing, Physical Education, and a range other subjects and activities with their hearing peers. Being in an LRE would facilitate this fluid experience.

3. The Ministry of Education should require that teachers of the Deaf be JSL proficient before they are employed to teach at the schools for the Deaf. It is understood that this may create an initial recruitment problem for these

schools, but over time it would help to significantly improve student outcomes, and increase the pool of qualified interpreters available to the sector.

4. The Ministry of Education should require that all postsecondary and tertiary institutions have inclusive education policies and practices. These policies should require the provision of interpretative or other assistive services once a student matriculates to the institution.
5. Led by the Ministry of Education, the Deaf education providers should work with the community colleges as well as HEART to develop specific programmes for the Deaf. The evidence from AF shows that with effective facilitation, Deaf students can successfully participate in training programmes that equip them for the labour force. Community Colleges are an especially important partner in this effort as they have flexible matriculation requirements, and can be a gateway to further tertiary studies, or to the labour force. Teachers' college should also be equipped to provide tertiary education for the Deaf, as they provide a ready pool of future teachers of the Deaf and of professional sign language interpreters.
6. It is important to strengthen the capacity of the JCPD to work with employers to develop inclusive organisations. The Council can build on work already being done by CCCD, JAD, and the Jamaica Junior Achievement to develop the awareness among employers of the issues affecting the Deaf in the workplace, especially the implications for the employer of having Deaf team members. The Council should partner with organisations which are already developing inclusive work places, using them as models for effective inclusion.
7. Strengthen Transition Services offered to the Deaf. The finalization and implementation of the Special Education Transition Policy should become a priority of the Education System Transformation Programme (ESTP). Included in this policy should be a heightened focus on workplace behaviour, the education and training programmes available for the Deaf. The policy should also include provision for the structured implementation of a

transition follow-up system for the Deaf for a period of at least 18 months after they leave school.

8. Led by JCPD, establish Transition Advisory Committee comprised of employers as a joint initiative with the JEF/PSOJ. This Board would help to bring awareness to issues affecting the Deaf in the workplace, and also to educate employers about what it takes to employ the Deaf.
9. The Public sector should provide strategic leadership and a clear example on the issue. This should be reflected in a deliberate effort by the Government of Jamaica to recruit and train the hearing impaired in all areas of operations in which they have both an interest and the requisite qualifications. In some agencies this may be as data entry clerks (as now happens at the JCPD), or in administrative support services, while in others they can be trained to undertake technical professional services in line with their training, as is the case of hearing persons working in the public sector.

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Appendix A:

List of Persons Interviewed

Individual	Position/Organisation
1. Mrs. Collette Robinson	Planning Institute of Jamaica
2. Ms. Yonique Lawrence	Planning Institute of Jamaica
3. Mrs. Natalie Stennett	Planning Institute of Jamaica
4. Dr. Iris Soutar	Executive Director, Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD)
5. Kimberly Sherlock	Director Social Services, JAD
6. Dr. Paul Golding	Dean of the College of Business and Management, University of Technology (UTECH)
7. Rev. Percival Palmer	Parent
8. Mrs. A. Smith-Watson	Acting Principal, Lister Mair Gilby School for the Deaf
9. Mrs. Christine Addington	Senior Education Officer, Special Education, Ministry of Education
10. Ms. Rhoden	Administrator, May Pen Unit
11. Ms. Donna Harris	Administrator, St. Christopher's School for the Deaf
12. Mrs. Porsha Byfield	Teacher, May Pen Unit
13. Mrs. McLeish	Social Worker, JAD Social Services Division
14. Mrs. Brenda Cuthbert	Executive Director, Jamaica Employers' Federation (JEF)
15. Mr. Robert Smith	Programme Manager, Jamaica Junior Achievement.
16. Dr. Michele Meredith	Special Education Specialist, Education System Transformation Programme (ESTP) Ministry of Education
17. Ms. Gloria Young	Data Entry Operator Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities
18. Mrs. Christine Hendricks	Executive Director, Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities.
19. Senator Floyd Morris	Executive Director, Center for Disability Studies, University of the West Indies
20. Ms. Sharma Lee Cordoza	Office of Special Student Services, UWI
21. Mrs. Bolt Williams	Manager, Step-to-Work Programme, Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS)
22. Ms. Belinda Austin	Project Manage, Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, MLSS
23. Mrs. Dione Jennings	Chief Technical Director, MLSS
24. Ms. Taryn Harriott	Student, Norman Manley Law School
25. Ms. Susan Hamilton	Executive Director, Abilities Foundation
26. Mr. Danville Jones	Executive Director, Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf (CCCD)
27. Mr. Headley	Campus Manager, CCCD
28. Mr. Damian Campbell	Pastor, Jamaica Deaf Village
29. Ms. Kimberly Sherlock	Transition Services, JAD.
30. Mrs. Felicia Campbell	Guidance Counselor, CCCD

Appendix B

School-To-Work Transition of the Deaf in Jamaica

Employers' Questionnaire

1. Name of Organization: _____
    a. Location (Branch): _____
2. Nature of business: _____
3. Number of people employed (give categories):_____ _____
4. Have you ever employed someone who is deaf? (If Yes, answer questions '6b' through '6e', If No Skip to q.5)
        i. Yes
        ii. No (Skip to q.5)
        iii. Can't recall/ Not sure
    b. If yes, in the last 3 years how many Deaf citizens have you employed?

        _____
    c. If yes, was this a positive experience?
        i. Yes
        ii. No
        iii. Can't recall/ Not Sure
    d. In what way was it positive?

        _____

        _____
    e. In what way was it negative?

        _____

        _____

5. Are there currently any Deaf people working in your organization?
        i. Yes
        ii. No
        iii. Not sure

6. Have you ever worked alongside someone who is deaf?
    i. Yes
    ii. No
    iii. Not sure
7. For each of the questions below, circle the response that best characterizes how you feel about the statement, where 1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Undecided, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I think Deaf people are just as capable as those who can hear	1	2	3	4	5
People who are deaf would find it difficult to work here	1	2	3	4	5
Employing people who are deaf would be too stressful	1	2	3	4	5
People who are deaf cannot work here because no one would understand them	1	2	3	4	5
My staff would feel uncomfortable if a Deaf person joins the staff	1	2	3	4	5
It's too hard building a team with people who are deaf	1	2	3	4	5
A Deaf person would get left behind in this organization	1	2	3	4	5
A Deaf worker would slow us down	1	2	3	4	5
We would be less productive if a Deaf person were on staff	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I do not know how to communicate with a Deaf person	1	2	3	4	5
I don't have time to learn how to communicate with a Deaf person	1	2	3	4	5
This organisation cannot afford the adjustments needed to hire the Deaf	1	2	3	4	5
Deaf people can only do manual labour	1	2	3	4	5
It makes no sense hiring a Deaf person, they couldn't do the job	1	2	3	4	5
The work here is too technical for Deaf people	1	2	3	4	5
I would be happy to hire Deaf people as long as they are qualified	1	2	3	4	5
Deaf people should be given the same opportunities as others	1	2	3	4	5

Annex C

JAD MOH Stats

Persons assessed for hearing loss 2012		Normal or Near Normal hearing		Persons with Hearing Loss		Mild	Moderate	Severe	Profound
Adults	582	60	84	438	75%	67	91	171	109
Children	792	389	223	180	23%	72	42	33	33
Totals	**1374**	**449**	**307**	**618**	**45%**	**139**	**133**	**204**	**142**
Hearing Enhancement									
Hearing Aid Consultations -Adults			263	Adults fitted with hearing aids			67	25%	
Hearing Aid Consultations - Children			46	Children fitted with hearing aids			21	46%	

Persons assessed for hearing loss 2013		Normal or Near Normal hearing		Persons with Hearing Loss		Mild	Moderate	Severe	Profound
Adults	508	60	62	386	76%	43	99	131	113
Children	792	450	156	186	23%	72	60	22	32
Totals	**1300**	**510**	**218**	**572**	**44%**	**115**	**159**	**153**	**145**
Hearing Enhancement									
Hearing Aid Consultations -Adults			223	Adults fitted with hearing aids			51	23%	
Hearing Aid Consultations - Children			31	Children fitted with hearing aids			12	39%	

Persons assessed for hearing loss 2014		Normal or Near Normal hearing		Persons with Hearing Loss		Mild	Moderate	Severe	Profound
Adults	521	47	85	389	75%	42	84	180	83
Children	883	557	173	153	17%	51	46	26	30
Totals	**1404**	**604**	**258**	**542**	**39%**	**93**	**130**	**206**	**113**
Hearing Enhancement									
Hearing Aid Consultations -Adults			235	Adults fitted with hearing aids			66	28%	
Hearing Aid Consultations - Children			25	Children fitted with hearing aids			15	60%	

The Appropriate Use of Terminology in regards to Deafness

This paper seeks to outline the position of the Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD) in collaboration with the Deaf Community, with respect to appropriate versus inappropriate use of terminology when interacting with deaf persons or dealing with issues relating to Deafness.

A strategic focus of the Jamaica Association for the Deaf for 2010 – 2014 is to improve communication access for the Deaf Community. This issue was raised during the public forum at the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Association in February 2011. Strong calls for communication access were articulated by members of the Deaf Community. Communication Access in the Media was highlighted as the Deaf Community expressed frustration with the negative profile and misuse of terminology regarding deafness and Deaf persons. While the media oftentimes use terminology generally accepted by the wider Jamaican community, it does little to preserve the positive image and the sincere efforts and abilities of Deaf people; instead, it perpetuates the mistaken feeling of pity among the public.

Participants identified the need to build awareness and to sensitize stakeholders about the appropriate use of terminology regarding Deaf people.

It was agreed that, for communication access to be given to all persons including members of the Deaf Community, there is need to tackle perceptions and misconceptions from several angles. One of the most influential approaches is to cause a paradigm shift within media houses knowing that "*words are powerful*". The aim is to introduce and familiarize the media to appropriate words that can portray a positive image of the Community. Some persons may not understand the importance of this issue to the Deaf Community, but the perpetuation of negative perceptions about the community has functioned as a barrier to their development.

The Appropriate Use of Terminology in regards to Deafness

To achieve a paradigm shift in the attitude of Jamaican society, we will have to address the negative perceptions about Deaf people.

This process needs to begin by effecting change within the Disability Sector, schools for the Deaf, and the Deaf community before we can influence the wider society.

Recognizing that various terminologies have been used over the years, this document offers an updated position on this important issue.

Definition of appropriate terminology:

Deaf	Persons who have hearing loss, and identify with Deaf Culture, including use of JSL.
deaf	(i) A term used to talk about deafness (ii) Persons who have hearing loss, who may not identify with Deaf Culture, and may not interact with members of the Deaf Community.
Deaf Community	A distinctive linguistic and cultural group of persons
Deaf Culture	The shared language, practices, values and beliefs of the Deaf community
Hard of Hearing	Persons who may have slight to moderate hearing loss.

The Appropriate Use of Terminology in regards to Deafness

Persons who may or may not identify with Deaf Culture including those who may or may not use sign language.

Hearing impairment/impaired

A medical term used to identify or label a diagnosis regarding the hearing ability of the patient

JSL Jamaican Sign Language (JSL) is the primary and natural language of the Jamaican Deaf community

Special notes:

- Persons may identify themselves with any one of the above, and should be respected.
- When describing a person, it is appropriate to use Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- When describing a hearing loss or medical condition, it is appropriate to use Hearing Impairment/impaired or deaf.
- The use of capital "D" in Deaf always indicate a cultural perspective, while common "d" in deaf denotes a medical meaning.
- A number of Deaf/Hard of Hearing persons do not consider themselves to have a disability but view the response and attitude of society as creating the disabling environment. Once the appropriate adaptations are made for full communication access, they can participate equally in society.
- Barriers are created when society limits the potential of Deaf/Hard of hearing persons by making decisions based on their hearing loss.

The Appropriate Use of Terminology in regards to Deafness

Inappropriate use of terminology:

Deaf-Mute	Many persons assume that deaf persons are also mute. Some deaf persons choose not to use their voice because it is difficult to control one's voice without the ability to hear it. It is therefore inaccurate to describe all deaf persons as being deaf-mute.
Dummy/Dumb	A derogatory term which is offensive to deaf persons. The word implies stupidity or an intellectual impairment. Such words are NOT to be used to refer to, identify or define a deaf person.
Handicap	This word has been replaced with the use of the term "disability".
The Hearing Impaired	Persons should not be defined by impairments they may have as it does not adequately address the entire person. The term Hearing Impaired should NOT be used to identify or define a person. Hearing impairment is a medical term and is used to define a hearing diagnosis. It does not respect the inherent dignity of a deaf person.

The use of the terms mentioned above is generally accepted by the Deaf Community worldwide.

The Appropriate Use of Terminology in regards to Deafness

The JAD and the wider Jamaican Deaf Community desire to create an inclusive society. The use of appropriate terminology will contribute to cultivating mutual respect among hearing and deaf persons and will foster a positive image of deaf persons as valued members of society, contributing to nation building.

This position is consistent with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD); which advocates for:

1. Respect for inherent dignity
2. Non-discrimination
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
4. Respect for differences and acceptance as part of human diversity and humanity.
5. Equality of opportunity
6. Accessibility
7. Equality between men and women
8. Respect for the evolving capacity of children and the rights of deaf and hard of hearing children to preserve their identity.

The JAD strives to be an organization that respects all diverse groups. It is out of respect for the inherent dignity of Deaf persons that the JAD seeks to promote the use of terminology preferred by the Deaf Community. The JAD therefore encourages and supports the use of appropriate terminology as it relates to the Deaf Community.