



JAMAICA DIASPORA EDUCATION TASK FORCE
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REPORT ON JDETF 3rd BIENNIAL ADVANCEMENT IN EDUCATION SUMMIT 2018

The recent staging of the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force (JDETF) 3rd Biennial Advancement in Education and Teacher Training Summit 2018 far exceed the expectations of the planning team and the attendees.

Hosted by the Mayor of Miramar, Wayne Messam, and for the first time in the USA, the Summit was a week-long agenda of activities for members of the Diaspora as well as persons from the education arena in Jamaica led by the Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid and his three (3) member delegation.

Under the theme *“Continuing the Education Partnership: Expanding the Advancement of Education,”* activities included tours of schools, presentations and discussions on STEM/STEAM, Special Education, and Alumni Day.

The week began with **school tours** that included (but not limited to) an early childhood center (that takes babies from six (6) weeks old), an adult school, and Broward College. Resulting action items include: (1) Seagull Adult High School: Establish support for maladaptive students; and (2) Broward College: Develop a Memorandum of Understanding for an exchange program for faculty and students in an exchange program; share best practices for the College Credit program for high school students.

Summit Day began with an official opening ceremony with speakers that included City of Miramar Mayor Wayne Messam, Commissioner of Broward County Dale Holness, JDETF Chairman Leo Gilling, Deputy Consul General to Miami Cecile Christy, and Ambassador Audrey Marks.

The Keynote Speaker was Minister Ruel Reid who provided an in-depth overview of the education system in Jamaica including the history and current status.

The STEM plenary session that followed addressed approaches to use problem-based and project-based learning as vehicles for encouraging STEM in classrooms as a growing focus for developing young persons.

The day ended with a lively panel discussion led by several Diasporans in their respective fields regarding services that can be used in Jamaica as well as topics related to STEM and Special Education.

On **Friday morning**, several stakeholders, including representatives from Jamaica’s Council of Community Colleges, Teachers’ Colleges, UJAA, the JDETF, the National Education Trust, the Chief Education Officer in the MoEYI and members of the Diaspora convened a discussion surrounding to the development and advancement of STEM as an enrichment initiative in Jamaica.

Updates on programs and aspects of STEM in Jamaica were shared. It was unanimously agreed that continued and enhanced collaboration between Jamaicans at home and abroad would help to advance this important initiative to Jamaica's future.

Several agreements were reached:

- An 'organization' chart was developed that included all organizations – both in Jamaica and the Diaspora – as well as all levels of education, the MoEYI and the Jamaica Teachers Association.
- The National Education Trust will serve as the secretariat to facilitate communication and activities between all parties.
- Terms of Reference (TOR) will be developed and shared in mid-April for review and ultimate adoption by all parties.
- Building on the EXSEED program (an initiative between the JDETF/Loma Linda University and the JTA), we will collaborate to host a STEM conference in July 2018 in Jamaica to focus on STEM training for teachers, trainers of teachers, and school administrators. Hack<IT> Jamaica – a STEM enrichment program for high school students and a collaboration between UJAA and STEMBoard LLC, will be held at a later date following the conference.

Alumni Day culminated the week of presentations. This historic gathering saw the engagement of the five (5) known umbrella organizations of alumni associations of schools in Jamaica. Led by the USA Northeast Union of Jamaican Alumni Associations (USA) Inc. (UJAA), there were chapter members from the Florida, Toronto, UK and Jamaica organizations.

Aside from the fellowship and camaraderie that abounds when “old boys” and “old girls” get together, the aim was to share the support services available to schools for educational materials by the National Education Trust, providing resources and support for early childhood and special education by Do Good Jamaica, and the work of the National Education Inspectorate to educate past students on how they can focus on the needs of their schools.

There was also a very interesting presentation about how boys and girls learn differently by a representative from the Gurian Institute. The morning ended with an address by Minister Ruel Reid who spoke about policy direction and areas of need within the education system.

Discussions surrounding an education partnership between the City of Miramar, Florida and the City of Kingston, Jamaica that was started before the Summit was mentioned. A city-to-city partnership, facilitated by the mayors of Miramar and Kingston is being pursued.

The JDETF successfully added to their rolling 6-year plan that began following the first Summit in 2014. The engagements that will follow support their mission to advance education by listening to Jamaica, and by including everyone involved in the development of our teachers, our children and, ultimately, our country - Jamaica.

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