

Jeffrey Town Environmental Learning Programme: Design Workshop

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JTFA Media Centre, Jeffrey Town, St Mary, Jamaica

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Introduction

What happens in a community when initiative is supported by cooperation and mentorship? In the particular case of JETFM and the Jeffrey Town Farmers Association what we have seen is a strengthening of commitment, a deepening of the appreciation for collaborative work and partnerships, and a notable improvement in the quality of product. These are positive outcomes of the Environmental Learning Programme Design Workshop sponsored by the Commonwealth of Learning over a three month period July 28 – September 25, 2009.

The initial four day workshop had participation ranging between 16 and 22 and output of two radio programmes – packaged to run for 10 and 18 minutes. With added time of panel discussion after the programme each was at least a 30 minute in duration. That exercise was as a major success for both the organizers, the facilitators, and the participants having both training of volunteers and programmes designed and produced by the participants focus on two of the many issues identified by the group in the community issues identification session – improving farming education and garbage management.

But to have four programmes fully produced and a fifth in production within such a short time is proving quite motivating for the volunteers and inspiring for the facilitators. A series of ten programmes is being developed around climate change and its impact on the local Jeffrey Town community, the wider St. Mary-St. Catherine-St. Ann region, and nationally. All the programmes are utilizing the magazine approach of combining music and poetry, drama, discussion, *vox-pops*, and interviews with the primary aim of educating its public about the identified issue.

From the first session on assessing how people learnt, participants agreed that for learning to take place content needed to be introduced in clear and precise ways, a specific behaviour or performance needed to be identified, promoted, and measured, and that educational material could be reinforced by repetition in various forms, especially using music and drama which were very popular forms among the community audiences.

In the final analysis participants – including teachers of primary and high schools in the area and volunteers of the radio station – had an opportunity to first of all create radio content on the identified subject focus. But the opportunity was also one for demonstrating the technical skills learnt in capturing and editing both sound and word. With three follow sessions during August and September the volunteers managed to demonstrate both their application and critical skills in delivering products that are consistent with professional standards and expectations. There is definitely individual and collective growth taking place.

The work of Mr. Takaya Ramsook in Digital Editing and the support of Dr. Maria Protz, Senior Associate at CARIMAC with special responsibility for Climate Change Communication have been significant to this process of change. At the end of the training workshop those who attended more than seventy-five percent of the sessions received Certificates of participation endorsed by both CARIMAC and COL. But of greater import is the fact that a little more than fifty percent of the trainees are consistently contributing to the production of the radio series.

The workshop notes presented in this report are representation of the interactive and participatory approach of the workshop highlighting the main topics covered, presenting the general participants input, and comments usually meant as reinforcement of main lessons from the facilitator at critical points in the workshop. The recommendations made here are in no way exhaustive given the great potential for future work but more as a guide towards tapping that potential.

The recommendations include follow-up training, developing a plan for consistent production of radio content, and a structured evolution towards meaningful and sustained partnerships between JFTA, JET Fm, COL, CARIMAC, and other institutions and organizations working in rural agriculture, health, education and developmental fields.



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

UNDERSTANDING GROUP DYNAMICS

What does it mean to be in a group?

Process

Using the *Atom* game as a warm up and group formation activity, two groups were established to do the *Tangle* challenge. The rules are simple:

Stand in a circle facing inwards. Stretch your right hand out and reaching across hold somebody's hand. Then reach out with your left hand hold a different person's hand. You should not be holding the hand of the person next to you. You have now created a knot or tangle in the centre of the circle. The aim is to untangle yourselves into a circle without letting go of each other's hand. Note, you must not become unattached in the process.

Lessons

Participants: At first this seemed an impossible task but once there was recognition that this is a serious exercise a way had to be found to get out of the tangle. People needed to work together to solve the problem. It required teamwork. But it was also acknowledged that many are part of a team yet do not work together. Another important highlight was that there are points at which different leaders will emerge depending on the skills necessary to move beyond the particular point and given the prevailing circumstances...In the final analysis though the circle was formed/the problem solved by applying different levels of participation, persistence in effort and attempts, trying unconventional means, and listening and acknowledging the opinions and advice of others.

Trainer presentation: Everybody brings his/her own skills, resources, knowledge to the process but by yourself that really means nothing. Unless you bring those skills or resources or that knowledge to bear upon the situation or circumstances in which you find yourself (it does not matter how good you think you are) the real value will only be determined when those skills and resources are shared with others.

It is also important to note that there are several angles from which a problem may be solved. Sometimes you have to go under, or over, or around the obstacle to find the solution. Sometimes you have to look to a corner or voice in which you don't normally seek answers because in many instances the answer you are sure about turns out to be not so right after all; the voice and person you believe to be the voice of reason will not always be the right voice for the particular moment. It means therefore that we have to learn to develop confidence in each other and to encourage each other and to encourage each other to contribute to the process of change no matter how insignificant the contribution may be.

In this business of communication, community radio, or broadcasting and especially in community communication, the individual is only as good as the collective is willing to make you. You cannot do it alone. It is about group work, teamwork, working together, being on the same page all of us involved in achieving the agreed outcome. It is about sharing the skills, the resources, the knowledge, the determination and courage of the collective.

EXPLORING THE ISSUES

Radio as a community learning platform

How do people learn?

People learn from listening and communicating...from reading...through music, drama and the practical experiences of life...observing, teaching self...through repetition and reinforcement....

How do we know that people are learning?

When there is an obvious **change** in behaviour and attitude...**eagerness for new** information and skills...**application** of the knowledge they have learnt...when people start **opening** to new ideas and being **respectful** of other views and opinions, and other people generally...

Can radio be used to teach people?

Yes....Communication is at the root of all learning experience and the radio is a tool for communication. But it means being as deliberate in the presentation of the content as are the teachers in the classroom or in any other of the regular settings for teaching. You have to be entertaining in your education.

How different is radio from the classroom?

The first thing is that there is a **wider audience reach**...and there is **no age limit or restriction**...the audience is **not within physical reach**...radio is about **listening**...but listeners also have to be able to **see and believe** what they are hearing.

What do teachers do in preparing for learning?

Teachers think about what they have to teach – the **content**...They also want to know **why they are teaching** a particular content area or topic and what are the **learning outcomes**. Radio is no different; you must have something to say or do; and you should be clear about what perceptions, behaviours or attitudes you want to see because of your broadcast.

Teachers also think about their **audience** (students) and the kind of experiences they have had with the content and therefore what would be the best way to engage them in the learning process. Like teachers you want to have an understanding of who they are – where they are, what they are thinking, what are their likes and dislikes in terms of music, talk, humor, views and opinions held about certain issues such as social class, economic status, politics and what are the best ways of appealing to such an audience.

Trainer presentation: Everybody wants to play music and be an announcer or a disc jockey (DJ). Everybody wants to be behind the microphone or the console mixing the music or just talking with other people and be like the popular talk show hosts of our time. It is a great feeling to be connecting with your audience and to be able to talk like them, to tell them humorous stories, to mix up and blend in the Jamaican parlance. But the question you have to ask is this: *what is the purpose of being on the air?*

Are you on air to entertain, to inform, or to educate...or are you on the air to transform?

Community radio is and has to be about transformation. It means, therefore, that those who are involved in community radio have a responsibility to use **entertainment for education** – what some people call *edutainment*; to **inform** your audiences in such a way that the choices they make will be sound choices. You have a responsibility to help with the advancement of the community in which you are located by using this powerful medium called radio to reach out to your community, to teach your community, to bring a sense of worth to your community so that all of the community can feel good about itself and about the source of that transformation, your radio station.

It is important that the community's joys, aspirations, and success find a space to be articulated and appreciated because in the long run community media is about having the people set their own agenda and from their own perspectives – not from that of the traditionally powerful and wealthy such as the politicians and business people with their sweet talk and advertising dollar, nor from the perspective of the outsider who we all think has the expertise and knowledge that's right for the insiders.

You must reach and teach the teachers, the students, the farmers, the unemployed, and the young entrepreneur, everyone who makes your communities unique and special. You have the opportunity, the channel, and the lessons to make a real and meaningful difference to community health, to agricultural education, to cultural development, and to improving the welfare of your communities generally and that's an awesome responsibility you dare not take for granted.

EXPLORING THE ISSUES

Envisioning community

What are some of the challenges faced by your community?

Lack of employment and entertainment centres
High cost of transportation and too little options for destination
Teenage parenting too high – affecting the viability of the community effort to sustain itself
Low level of respect between the youth and the older folks...
Unacceptable level of illiteracy level unacceptable...and praedial larceny
Partisan affiliation...

Where do you see your community in five years?

At least one social infrastructure such as sports centre
Factory for agro-producing with proper marketing strategy in place and employing people in the community
Greater influence from JETFM
Promoting environmental protection and agricultural best practices

What are the major environmental issues faced by the community?

Chemical disposal...note the mechanical garages
Disposal of garbage
Poor treatment of water
Extreme changes in weather pattern

What are the major farming issues faced by the community?

Major issues revolve around limited access to land, new farming information, appropriate technology, materials such as farm inputs, and financial aid
Generally bad roads – both farming and community
Water
Marketing and management of output

EXPLORING THE ISSUES

Environmental education communication

<i>Key Issues</i>	<i>Sources for Content – Informational</i>	<i>Sources for Content – Institutional</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>
Waste management	<i>Fact sheets Technical reports Internet Radio and television documentaries and features</i>	<i>JET Schools Environment Programme (SEP) Caribbean Agricultural and Research Development Institute (CARDI)</i>	<i>JET, National Solid Waste Management Authority(NSWMA)</i>
Water treatment	<i>Information spreads Technical reports Magazines Internet</i>	<i>National Water Commission(NWC) National Irrigation Commission(NIC) Water Resources Authority(WRA)</i>	<i>Caribbean Agricultural and Research Development Institute (CARDI)</i>
Climate change	<i>Fact sheets News releases Technical reports Internet</i>	<i>Forestry Department NEPA CARIMAC</i>	<i>CARIMAC Caribbean Centre for Communication for Development</i>
New agricultural practices	<i>Fact sheets Internet Radio and television documentaries and features Farm Radio International</i>	<i>Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (JOAM) Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA)</i>	<i>CARDI, JOAM, Developing Countries Farm Radio Network (DCFRN)</i>

DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE

Working with a matrix

Main themes	Positive practices	Benefits	Main messages	Tag lines
Organic farming	Composting	Improved crop yield and health of community Savings	Organic farming is for everybody	<i>Get inna di compost</i>
Waste management	Sorting	Improved health, cost effectiveness	Proper garbage disposal improves health and wealth	<i>Turn your trash into cash</i>

Understanding audiences

Time was spent in looking at the different aspects of the audience... age, education, social background, beliefs – religious, cultural, relationships, gender stereotypes. Two concepts of significance to the group were idols and image... the former having to do with what influences are found in role models and how an audience's dreams and aspirations may be found or expressed in such models and how radio people are not only role models or idols but what impact they can have on an audience. Image is an important part of the communication industry and in as much radio is mostly audio it is acknowledged that audiences go for what they see in what they hear and if they feel as though the station is not reflecting the right image in terms of how people sound, the content of the programmes, the position taken on issues that are of value to them, they will not want to be associated with the station

FACILITATOR'S COMMENT ON DAY ONE

It was a fairly good day given that we managed to cover most of what we had set out to do. With 16 of the 21 persons scheduled to attend participating fully in all the activities and engaging each other and the facilitators for the entire day, it was a solid foundation laid for the coming days.

Participants seemed to have benefited tremendously from the day's work. From exploring some of the lessons learnt in the group obstacle game to presenting their message matrix on the selected topics – organic farming and solid waste management. All the participants at some level and in some shape or form capitalized on the opportunities given to share their thoughts, reflections, and ideas. As one very quiet participant said, *it was an interesting day and I learnt a lot*. One of the teachers from the Guys Hill High School who has been a volunteer with JetFM in recent times said, *I am enthused, refreshed...looking forward to more*.

The fact that the group started to focus on two issues – namely organic farming and solid waste management/garbage disposal – is good. After participants identified the content gap that needed to be filled on their part, a message matrix was developed looking at the negative practices around these themes and the consequences of such. Then they identified the desired behaviours to be promoted and the benefits of promoting these practices or behaviours.

A significant positive emerging from the issues exploration was an acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of the social, economic, and environmental dynamics of the community on one level and the underlying health implications on another level. The groups have recognized that there is both potential and need for a health education and promotion agenda.



DAY TWO: BUILDING THE FRAMEWORK

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Formats

Magazine to talk

Every good story has a beginning a middle and end so it is important to be clear in establishing specific objectives, the audience, content to be covered, and how it will be treated and in what style or form. Following on the lesson plan idea used in the classroom teaching it seems magazine format allows for the best combination of sharing information, interaction, and variety of styles. This means the programme could use news, drama, interviews – personality, informational, events, etc..., and discussion and music.

The structure of the programmes would be built around the same principles involved in developing a good drama – introduce the characters, situation, and environment in which the conflict is to be solved and build a series of action which gets more interesting at each developing stage. This action increases in intensity, appeal, and tension towards a climax. The important thing is that at the end the audience must not be left at the same level at which they started the journey and they must leave with a specific message and desire to return to the programme. They could return voluntarily or you could design a method of getting them involved in determining how the following programme will be done.

Production resources

Human and technical

Who are the important people to talk with about the topic and what equipment will we need to do that?

Will we bring the persons in the studio or will we record it on location?

Do we have the equipment necessary to do either and in the best way possible?

Who is going to do the interview and who is going to see to the technical quality of the recording?

Do the interviewers and technical support people have the competence and information to execute the project?

What level of preparation must be done for the project?

The programme matrix

Steps to be considered

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Define key terms
- Brainstorm – what are the different ways of defining garbage, types of garbage and disposal methods; examination of the correct versus existing practices

- Identify sources of information and ensuring that the information is useful and factual
- Highlight the health risks associated with improper management of waste

ORGANIC FARMING

- Define organic farming
- Identify types of organic farming
- Use of composting versus chemical fertilizer
- Highlight benefit which comes from cutting back on expenses in acquiring fertilizer and the possible use of funds to improve on the equipment side of the inputs

Production teams

Understanding roles and responsibilities

- Producer
- Presenter, interviewer, etc...
- Editor
- Scriptwriter
- Researcher
- Assistants

TECHNIQUES IN DIGITAL EDITING

Introduction to editing processes

- Connectors and connections
- Microphone setup, types and purpose
- Hand signals and their importance
- Modulation, compensation and oscillation
- Capturing good sound editing

Programming and digital formats

- Getting to know your programme/software (Adobe Audition...)
- Getting your computer ready for editing sound

Comment:

At the end of the day two sets of comments were produced by the participants. One was done by a group of four females on air – informing the the audience how the training was unfolding for them, and the second by a participant who is a volunteer producer with the station and a teacher at the high school in the community.

Participant:

On Wednesday July 29, 2009 some members of the jetfm had a training session on radio production. The session was held at the JTFA multimedia centre and was led by Patrick Prendergast and Mr. Takaya Ramsook.

It was an enlightening and educational session. Prendergast taught us about the importance of production and the essential elements that must be adhered to when creating any form of production. Some of these fundamentals include establishing the aims and objectives to be achieved, the methods to be used, the target audience and the need for diversity and dynamism in production.

In addition, the technical aspects involved in creating good quality sound effects were ably presented by Mr. Ramsook. He informed us about the impact and importance of sound effects; which can make or break any piece of production. He explained the use of various connectors and the importance of each type. He gave us practical training in the use and implementation of such devices.

The day came too an exciting end with the participants being placed into groups to actually produce and present a piece of production. It was a good learning experience even with the hiccups but all in all it was a lot of fun.

Sophronia Russell-Andrade



DAY THREE: ROLLING WITH THE PUNCHES

The third day was about application of lessons learnt. There was so much covered in the previous days' work it was necessary to have recaps and fill in original programme schedule items...

Apart from looking at how sound objectives can be SMART(ly) constructed and expressed the issue of how to involve the public in the programme delivery and creation was also explored...Using the multimedia centre facilities as a starting point the information gathering exercise was aimed at giving participants an opportunity to develop their own skills in identifying material and resources, and sources for content on the particular focus as well as the overall programme.

Team members also had to go out in the field to do their *vox pops* and special interviews. One interesting development which carried over from the digital editing session was the need and possible use of a studio-recording facility which the participants duly set up and used effectively for producing their short edu-drama pieces, doing voice over, and conduction discussion segments.

The real tensions within the groups started surfacing as people began to make demands on each to produce at their best. Executing assigned roles and responsibilities and demonstrating innovation and creativity is always challenging under these circumstances. Putting it all together as a way of teaching and learning should make the process much more participatory and give the participants a chance to explore freely.

Participant comment:

On the third day of training at the Jeffery Town Multi-media Centre every participant had the chance to work in the production set and be producers. The day was off to a good start even though we were behind schedule following the previous day's proceedings. The day began with the voicing and production of two pieces; this was for us to get a feel of the real thing. From this simulation exercise, some participants used up their hand signals well and there were those who were utilizing the mixing board ensuring that everything was going well with the microphones and the voice inputs.

Mr. Prendergast took us back to the first and second days of training with a quick recap, making references to some salient points a producer must know and adhere to. This was digested by eager and excited trainees who were ready to flex their Voices, Muscles and Brain, in preparing their own productions. The day was fast-paced and everyone was so involved that even through our refreshment breaks we had our hands filled.

The trainees who were placed in two groups 'Garbage Disposal Management' and 'Organic Farming' had until evening to produce and edit each a 30-minute magazine programme to be aired the next morning.

The building was buzzing with excitement. The two groups recorded interesting edu-drama pieces, interviews and vox-pops. These had us going for hours beyond the scheduled end of day but we still didn't get to complete the editing for the day. We look forward to stepping up the work on day four.

Orane Brown



DAY FOUR: TESTING, TESTING! THE WAY FORWARD

Two programmes were produced and piloted both of which carried live discussion panels at the end of each. An assessment of the workshop was also done. The participants expressed full satisfaction with meeting the expectations they expressed on day one as follows:

- Meet, greet and have a great time learning
- Learn things useful to me
- Be better equipped to work in radio programming, production, and broadcasting
- Exposure to media skills
- Develop personality
- How to be professional in presenting to radio listeners
- Full understanding of what will be learnt
- Improve communication skills – better vocabulary, speaking English
- Change in way we approach radio

Products:

The two programmes are attached as audio files.

Identified follow-up work

1. Future work to be done in the areas of speaking, vocabulary building and presentation skills...CARIMAC could help with this especially in taking a well known practitioner and broadcaster to the community
2. Developing a long communication strategy for the Jeffrey Town Farmers Association and especially working on their planning and management skills as well as marketing...CARIMAC could lead on this with partnership from CARDI and RADA
3. At least two more days of workshop with specialized groups in editing and developing the programme series and projections for production
4. One more day for assessment – both in helping them to do it and doing a final one for the training exercise

A one-month period is identified within which follow up sessions and technical support from both the facilitators, CARIMAC, and other partners involved in education, health, agriculture and the environment will be held. At the end of that period a clear plan of action for the way forward will be established – to include the direction and development of the radio programmes, the platforms for feedback from the community and the schools, and the steps needed to underscore sustainability of the work started at this workshop.

Final Presentation:

Deepest appreciation to everyone for everything they have brought to the process. It was an absolutely fulfilling and productive week for all 25 people involved as participants on one level or the other – trainers, trainees, support.

There is no doubt in my mind that JETFM can become the real voice of the region promoting and reflecting the transformational attitudes, behaviour and education that will place the people of Jeffrey Town and its environs at the forefront of improving lives and livelihood through community media. The partnership between JTFA and institutions like COL and Carimac and other institutions is developing into tremendous source and force for community action and change. This has to be preserved.

Apart from the natural anxieties which come from trying to meet deadlines for project completion, everybody demonstrated how far their potentialities are being mobilized and in so doing exhibited the possibilities of JETFM as radio that can educate and empower a community.

Having completed their projects for airtime they also were able to express a deeper appreciation of the value of research, the frustration of managing individual personalities and keeping a group together, the significance of setting objectives - including making the time frame agreed, the rewarding challenges of producing for radio, the importance of paying attention to details, and the demand for consistency in application of thinking, creative and technical skills applicable to creating educational but entertaining products.

To promote and broadcast 2 hours of programming which included two excellently produced programmes - *Organic farming - The way forward* and *Cash in Trash*, both of which utilized drama, vox pops, informational interviews, music and creative exciting announcements and jingle to bring their messages across to listeners, was indeed real achievement. Of course, a major unintended objective of setting up a basic recording studio with the capacity for a 4-person recording is also an indication of the level of application which the participants brought to the process.

The organizers, facilitators, wonderful participants, the community and the volunteers at JETFM, have done very well.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The follow-up sessions on August 28 and September 11 and 25 proved to be quite inspirational for both the participants and especially the facilitator. The growth demonstrated in the programmes presented, particularly on September 11, was in fact overwhelmingly gratifying. Even the participants noted the significant improvement made over the production period from the first to the fourth programme. The content and production skills have been sharpened, the creative initiative and personal confidence have jumped, and as one of the teachers volunteering states, there has even been a *transfer of knowledge gained in the experience at JET Fm to my teaching in the classroom*.

This is the kind of transformational and developmental power and role of community media that must be highlighted.

At the last formal session on September 25 participants were asked to share the significant changes made between the four-day workshop and the mentorship period. The responses are quite instructive:

- I have grown tremendously in writing drama
- I now appreciate the meaning of dedication; given the need to meet deadlines sometimes we have to put in the extra late-night
- Now that we have to be writing content and researching new areas there has been an increase in my knowledge base about specific things and around general themes
- The experience has enhanced my learning of production skills, and putting together a script for programmes to produce
- We are now thinking of doing new community issues programme
- Some of us have moved away from the basic desire to play music and to be involved in well planned and structured programmes which will use up a variety of skills, such as interviewing
- Drama scripting and performance make me even more confident in my own abilities

The workshop had an average of 22 persons over the four days. Despite a fall off of the numbers during the mentorship period between the workshop and the final critique on September 25 this should not be seen a negative light only. In fact, over the mentorship period we managed to consolidate a solid production team with specific responsibilities to cover producers, editors, interviewers, reporters, announcers and the affirmation of an executive producer team of three. Those who contribute consistently to the development of the first parts in the series of ten programmes are now down to an average of 12 persons. This is in the context of the reopening of schools – both for those at student age and the teachers – and is therefore understandable.

However, it is noted that most of those who are currently carrying the work load are the female volunteers. The gender gap that exists in the education system generally and within the workforce is manifesting itself even at the community level and certainly impacts volunteerism. For JET Fm this gender disparity can be an issue because as is customary in the community, the males are the ones who have consistently shown interest in the so called technical aspects of broadcasting, and especially in production areas such as editing. Yet, the boys are not consistently helping to get the programmes completed.

However, this has resulted in a rising sense of initiative and innovation on the part of the women. More women are now learning the editing process and are pointing to the need for follow-up work to be done to satisfy this necessary shift in the demographics. In as much as the initial workshop attempted to buck the tradition by having both males and females involved in all aspects of the training, it is not always easy to tackle traditional and sometimes entrenched notions of gender roles in these rural communities.

In terms of challenges being faced by the JTFA and JET Fm, theses remain centred around limited facilities and therefore limitations on the human capacity to deliver not just the quality but quantity of programmes. The make-shift studio for recording interviews, discussions, and drama will have to be improved. The computer systems and requisite soft-ware will have to be sourced and sustained. While the audio recorders are standing up, there will have to be a move towards JET Fm owning a few more of such recorders.

Of course, the whole notion of what it means to be a volunteer continues to be a major point of contention, distraction, and projection all at once. This has been the lot of small community outfits like that of the JFTA. It is encouraging that both JFTA and the volunteers are willing to engage in public discussions about volunteerism as well as to explore creative ways in building and sustaining an incentive scheme for the volunteers of JET Fm.

Nevertheless the following areas are ripe for immediate follow-up training and exposure:

- Interviewing and information gathering skills
- On –air presentation skills
- Copywriting for advertising
- Functioning as a producer of radio programming

Potential partnerships and networking opportunities are now clearer than before and should be explored urgently between JTFA and among others, the following institutions:

- The Ministries of Health, Environment, Water, Agriculture, and Education
- CARIMAC @ Western Jamaica Campus, UWI Mona
- PANOS Caribbean
- Environmental Foundation of Jamaica
- Jamaica Aids Support and Lifestyle
- Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network

