

JSH  
# 259

# **Global Awareness Trip Manual**

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Final Report for Jamaica Self-Help

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**Jamaica Self-Help**

**Global Awareness Trip Manual**

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## Table of Contents

1. Abstract
2. Acknowledgements
3. Jamaican Self-Help Manual
4. Recommendations
5. Placement Agreement Contract
6. Bibliography

Jamaican Self-Help  
Global Education Awareness Trip Manual

By: Colleen Slattery

April 15, 2002

I have produced a manual for the Global Education Committee and trip leaders involved with Jamaican Self – Help (JSH). The reason for this project is to improve parts of an existing manual. My aims for this project were to develop aspects of the manual that trip leaders would be able to remove and use during briefing sessions with the participants. I researched and consulted with the Executive Director from JSH to gain my information. The final project is produced as part of a manual that JSH can include within their existing manual. Some of my recommendations for JSH are:

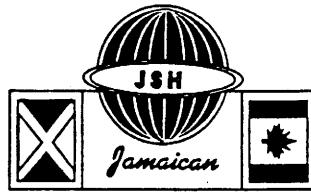
- to improve sections nine and ten of their manual
- to make sections eight, nine and ten into a freestanding manual
- to research more about the religion of Jamaica, as I did not go into great detail
- to make the rest of the manual that relates to the Global Education Awareness Trips more accessible for trip leaders (i.e. use a consistent font and format)

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge all of those that helped me throughout out my project and enabled me to complete it. Each person contributed greatly to my project and I would not have been able to do it without them. Thanks to Marisa Kaczmarczyk from Jamaican Self-Help for her continued help and support. Thanks to John Marsh my advisor and professor. As well Thanks to Francis Enns and Jennifer Bowes from the TCCBE for their guidance and support. Last, but certainly not least I would like to thank my classmates in Geography 440/470 for listening to my ideas, offering suggestions and support.

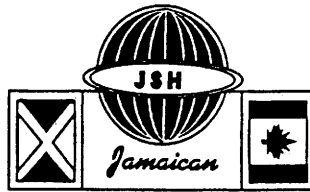
Thank you,

Colleen Slattery



## **8.0 BRIEFING – PRE TRIP**

- 8.1 Suggested Briefing Process**
- 8.2 Briefing Background Information and Handouts**
- 8.3 Preparation for Awareness Trips and Handouts**
- 8.4 What to Bring on Awareness Trips**
- 8.5 Culture Shock Information and Handout**
- 8.6 Cultural Awareness Handouts**
- 8.7 Codes of Conduct Handouts**
- 8.8 Sample Briefing Sessions**
- 8.9 Activities and Handouts for Briefing Sessions**
- 8.10 Placements**



## **8.2 Briefing Background Information and Handouts**

### Geography

**History**

**History Activity**

**Economy**

**Poverty**

**Religion and Education**

**National Heroes**

**Fast Facts**

## Geography of Jamaica

Jamaica is an island in the West Indies, 145 km south of Cuba and 161 km west of Haiti. The island is approximately 7,057 square kilometers and lies on an east/west axis. The length of the island is 233 kilometers and the width varies from 35 – 81 kilometers. Jamaica is the third largest island in the West Indies. The island is made up of coastal lowlands, a limestone plateau (which covers most of the island), and the Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains is a group of volcanic hills in the eastern part of the country. Blue Mountain is the tallest peak reaching heights of 7,402 ft. or 2,256 m.

Jamaica has a tropical maritime climate where seasons are different from Canada. Yet, weather patterns change drastically, with rain falling for a brief time then sun again! The average temperature is 27°C – 30°C year round, with February and March being the coolest months. Rainfall varies throughout the island. It is heavy on the Northeastern and northern coasts, with the Southern part of the island receiving very little. The average annual rainfall is 198 centimeters, with the rainy season which is different than Canada's, beginning in May or June and ending in November or December. The heaviest amount of rain falls in September and October.

Ecotourism came late to the Caribbean. Today it is on the rise, and National Parks and Wildlife Reserves are increasing. Ecologically, Jamaica is in dire straits. Many of the natural species are endangered or gone forever. Most of the interior was covered with forest; this was changed when Columbus arrived in 1494. The forest was felled and wetlands were drained for sugar plantations, and later, for bananas. Jamaica's hardwoods were logged for English furniture designers and craftspeople. Saving Jamaica's forest is not simply an aesthetic concern. The nation's water supply depends on the halting of deforestation and preservation of watersheds.

Jamaica's National Parks system is made up of three parks. The Blue Mountains – John Crow National Park, the Montego Bay Marine Park and the Negril Marine Park. The 483 square kilometer Blue Mountains – John Crow Park includes forest reserves and many endangered species. 40% of the plant species are indigenous to the country. Despite its many attractions; it attracts very few nature lovers. The Marine Parks are located around resort areas and were developed to protect, preserve and manage coral reefs, mangroves and offshore marine resources. In these areas fishing is banned and water sports are restricted to designated areas.



## History of Jamaica

Arawak Indians inhabited Jamaica when Columbus explored it in 1494 and named it St. Iago. The country remained under Spanish rule until 1655, when it became a British possession. The island prospered from wealth brought by buccaneers to their base, Port Royal, the capital near present day Kingston, until the city disappeared into the sea in 1692 after an earthquake. The Arawaks died off from disease and exploitation, and slaves were imported to work sugar plantations. The abolition of the slave trade (1807), emancipation of the slaves (1833), and a gradual drop in sugar prices led to depressed economic conditions that resulted in an uprising in 1865. The following year Jamaica's status was changed to that of a crown colony, and conditions improved considerably. Introduction of banana cultivation made the island less dependent on the sugar crop for its well being.

On May 5, 1953, Jamaica attained internal autonomy, and in 1958 it was a leader in organizing the West Indies Federation. However this effort at Caribbean unification failed when a nationalist labor leader, Sir Alexander Bustamente, led a campaign for withdrawal from the federation. As a result of a popular referendum in 1961, Jamaica became independent on Aug. 6, 1962. Michael Manley, of the People's National Party, became Prime Minister in 1972 and initiated a socialist program. The Labour Party defeated Manley's People's National Party in 1980 and its capitalist-oriented leader, Edward P. G. Seaga, became Prime Minister. He instituted measures to encourage private investment.

Like other Caribbean countries, Jamaica was hard-hit by the 1981–82 recession. By 1984, austerity measures that Seaga instituted in the hope of bringing the economy back into balance included elimination of government subsidies. Devaluation of the Jamaican dollar made Jamaican products more competitive on the world market and Jamaica achieved record growth in tourism and agriculture. While manufacturing also grew, the cost of many foods went up 50 to 75% and thousands of Jamaicans fell deeper into poverty. In 1989, Manley swept back into power with a clear victory. He indicated that he would pursue more centrist policies than he did in his previous administration. He stepped down in 1992 for health reasons and was replaced by P.J. Patterson.

A 31% increase in gasoline taxes on April 16, 1999, prompted three days of heavy rioting. As a result, the Prime Minister reduced the increase by half and looked for other ways of handling the country's \$37 million shortfall.

## Activity:

### History Timeline

Create a time line on flipchart or black board.

How to:

- 1) Put major dates (year) on straight horizontal line
- 2) Follow sheet and briefly talking about each major event as it happened.
- 3) As you talk about it, put it onto the time line.

For example:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Events</u>
1494	Columbus first explored Jamaica and named it St. Iago.
1655	No longer under Spanish rule, British took possession of the island. The island prospered from wealth brought by buccaneers.
1692	Port Royal (the capital) disappeared into the sea because of an earthquake. Slaves were brought in to work the land. The Arawaks died off from disease and exploitation and slaves were imported to work the sugar plantations
1807	Abolition of the slave trade
1833	Emancipation of the slaves.
1865	Economic uprising from a depressed state, due to low sugar prices.
1866	Jamaica's status was changed to that of a Crown Colony, improving conditions considerably. Introduction of Banana cultivation.
1938	Sir Alexander Bustamente formed the Bustamente Industrial Trade Union, the first trade union in the Caribbean. This same year Norman Manley formed the People's National Party the first political party in the colony.
1943	Bustamente followed suit by forming the Jamaican Labour Party.
1953	May 5 <sup>th</sup> Jamaica attained internal autonomy.
1958	Jamaica led in organizing the West Indies Federation. This effort at Caribbean unification failed, when Sir Alexander Bustamente led a campaign to withdrawal.
1961	Referendum held for Jamaican independence.
1962	August 6 <sup>th</sup> Jamaica is an Independent state.
1972	Manley of People's National Party became Prime Minister and initiated a socialist program.
1980	The Labour Party defeated Manley and its capitalist oriented leader; Edward P. G. Seaga became Prime Minister.
1981-82	Jamaica was hit hard by the depression.
1988	Hurricane Gilbert tore across the island, the first to do so since 1951.
1989	Manley swept back into power.
1992	Manley stepped down due to health problems and was replaced by P.J. Patterson.
1995	Jamaica ended a borrowing partnership with International Monetary Fund after 18 years.
1997	People's National Party came to its third term.
1999	An increase in gas prices prompted heavy rioting, leaving many injured and severely affecting tourism and income generation.

## Jamaican Economy

The Jamaican economy is highly developed compared to most Caribbean islands. It has a vital financial sector with many international banks, a large skilled workforce, and a relatively broad – based economy. It is however dependent on imported consumer goods and raw material. The USA is Jamaica's major trading partner, accounting for more than 1/3 of its exports and more than ½ of its imports. Historically, the Jamaican economy has had an agricultural base, dependent on a few staple export crops, primarily sugar and bananas. New economic development began with bauxite mining (after 1952), and the tourism boom in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1990s, tourism has become the major earner of foreign exchange.

The international recession, which occurred in the mid-1970s, adversely affected economic growth. Jamaica's economic stabilization and adjustment process, which began in the 1980s, advanced significantly during the 1990s as the stages of deregulation and liberalization were accelerated. This included the liberalization of the foreign exchange market, market determined interest rates, removal of price controls on goods, elimination of subsidies in products, lowering of fiscal borrowing requirements, and increasing the pace of privatization of government owned entities .

The main impetus for economic growth has come from expansion in the tourism industry, rehabilitation of export in agriculture, recovery in the bauxite/aluminum industry (after a setback in the 1980s) and in the service sectors.

In 1995 the economy grew by 0.4%, agriculture by 2.2% while mining, aluminum/bauxite fell by -6.5%. In September 1995, Jamaica successfully terminated eighteen years of a borrowing relationship with The International Monetary Fund. In March 1996, "The National Industrial Policy - A Strategic Plan for Economic Growth and Development" was presented through Parliament to the nation. The Policy has set specific targets for economic growth and targeted strategic clusters for development. An integral part of the Policy is a Social Partnership, which sets out agreements by the three social partners; government, labour and employees with regard to a number of areas of economic organization.

## Population and Poverty in Jamaica

Poverty remains an issue of concern. Although statistics remain generally incomplete, the general view has been that an unacceptably large percentage of the population of Jamaica lives in absolute poverty. The high percentage of female headed households also account for and tends to frustrate efforts at poverty alleviation and other development programmes.

Persistent widespread poverty, as well as social and gender inequities, has significant negative influences on population growth, structure and distribution. Unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, low status of women often accompany poverty. Exposure to environmental risks and limited access to social and health services, including reproductive health services. Adolescents and youth form the majority of the population. The youthful age structure is a vulnerable group because so many are out of school. They are therefore more difficult to reach and large numbers of young people continue to fall through the cracks. In the 15-24 age group the pregnancy rate is 20% and the unemployment rate is 47%. This is due in part to the fact that some 50% of young people are out of school by age 15 or 16. Some demonstrate low levels of literacy for their age, and most, especially the males, never get into any form of skills training or other structured socialization system.

Population density is 1,000 people/arable square kilometer. By 1980, 50% population lived in an urban area contributing to extreme poverty. By the 1970's and 80's the cities divided into ghettos. Political violence during this time is believed to be the primary cause behind today's situation. Each district is run by a don (a man or women) One district is protected publicly against another and residents do not travel from one district to another without the don's permission. Since 1995 the structure within the ghettos is breaking down as dons have less government money to distribute. Smaller gangs are able to gain more control and the illegal drug trade and drug abuse have escalated. Sub-standard housing, poor sanitation, lack of employment, and high pregnancy rates add to the challenging conditions.

## Religion and Education in Jamaica

The dominant religion of Jamaica is Christianity and it is interwoven into many aspects of society. Politically Jamaica is divided into fourteen different faiths. The public schools have devotions each morning and much of the singing is songs of the Christian faith. The other religion for which Jamaica is known is the Rastafarian faith. The church serves as an important social centre in Jamaican communities. In this poverty - ridden society the gospel is a source of hope, with its talk of equality and redemption in the afterlife. Jamaicans are very superstitious and many believe in ghosts and evil spirits.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture has overall responsibility for policy direction of education. Tuition is heavily subsidized at the primary and secondary levels. Churches run a number of schools and many receive subsidies from government. Students at the primary level formerly gained access to secondary education either by automatic promotion to high or comprehensive high schools through the Common Entrance Examinations (CEE). This examination was phased out in 1998 and was replaced in 1999 by a curriculum based National Assessment Program (NAP). The goal of the program is to assess the academic achievement of students at the primary level. Four assessments are done throughout the course of the program.

1. Grade One Readiness Inventory
2. Grade Three Diagnostic Test
3. Grade Four Literacy Test
4. Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT)

The first Grade Six-Achievement Test or GSAT took place in March 1999. Already it has been reported that the new exams have produced a change of attitude in students as there is virtually none of the anxiety and worry many used to face in the days leading up to the now defunct Common Entrance Examinations. Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) was a five year project (1993-98) designed to lead to improvements in secondary education in the first phase for students in grades 7-9, and in the second phase, for all students in grades 10-11. The three-year pilot project for grades 10 and 11 seeks to identify the necessary changes to upper-secondary level education. As a result, students will spend an additional year in high school.

Since the 1970s, the Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Literacy (JAMAL) has been working to eradicate adult illiteracy. Over the last seven years, some 113,878 persons have enrolled in its classes island wide. Its programme is organized by a core of professional workers, supported by a network of volunteers. The success by JAMAL and other educational programmes was reflected in a survey done in 1994, which revealed that 75.4% of all Jamaicans were literate.

## Jamaica's National Heroes

Jamaica has the equivalent of George Washington and Joan of Arc or Canada's own Terry Fox – individuals who, by force of character and example have been granted a special status as National Heroes. They have all earned the title "the Right Excellent". Jamaica has seven National Heroes:

Paul Bogle (unknown – 1865) was an independent farmer and black Baptist preacher. He led the underclass in the march on Morant Bay in 1865 that spun out of control and sparked the Morant Bay Rebellion. He fought for the underclass people of Jamaica. After the Rebellion a bounty was placed on his head, he was captured by the Maroons and executed by the British.

Alexander Bustamente (1884 – 1977) was the founder of the Jamaican Labour Party. He initiated independence and was the first Prime Minister of the independent nation from 1962 - 1967.

Marcus Garvey (1887- 1940) is considered the father of "black power" and was named Jamaica's first National Hero in 1980. In his youth he became involved in movements to improve the lot of black people. He founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and devoted his life to the cause of Black Nationalism.

George William Gordon (1820 – 1865) was a mixed raced lawyer, assemblyman, and post – emancipation nationalist. He was self educated and became a successful landowner, businessman and advocate of nationalism. He was elected to the assembly where he fought for the rights of the poor in Jamaica. As a Baptist minister he ordained Paul Bogle as deacon. Political opponents held Gordon responsible for the Morant Bay Rebellion. He was arrested and executed.

Norman Manley (1893 – 1969) was a lawyer who founded the People's National Party. He fought for political autonomy for Jamaica and became the self – governing island's first Prime Minister.

Nanny (dates unknown) was a legendary leader of the Windward Maroons in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. She was born and raised in the mountains and was never enslaved. She was a spiritual leader to the Maroons. Folklore attributes to her magical powers.

Sam "Daddy" Sharpe (1801 – 1832) a town slave named for his owner was a deacon at the Burchell Baptist Church in Montego Bay. British authorities hanged him for his role in leading the 1831 slave rebellion.

Within a few years several candidates are to be named National Heroes. Among them are ex – Prime Minister Michael Manley, reggae superstar Bob Marley, and Olympic gold medallist Merlene Ottey. Ottey will become the first living National Hero.

## Fast Facts

- 120 rivers! Most are bone dry throughout the year, but after a heavy rainfall they become raging rivers often causing major floods.
- Compressed skeletons of coral, clams and many other sealife creatures create limestone. The limestone filters the rainfall purifying Jamaica's water.
- Jamaica is considered to be in an earthquake zone. Port Royal was destroyed in 1662 and Kingston was devastated in 1907.
- Jamaica lies in the hurricane belt, but few have touched down on the island. This season lasts from June to November.
- Jamaican deforestation is rated to be the highest of any country in the world.
- Jamaica has protected 22% of its forest cover, more than any other island in the West Indies.
- August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1962 Jamaican gained Independence
- September 1995 Jamaica successfully terminated 18 years of a borrowing relationship with the International Monetary Fund.
- Tourism and bauxite count for ¾ of Jamaica's foreign exchange earnings.
- Jamaica's population is estimated at 2.615 million
- 1/3 of the Jamaican population is under the age of 15.
- Jamaica has the greatest number of Churches per square kilometer in the world!



## 8.3 Preparation for Awareness Trips

This section will help guide you through the next few months, as you make your mental, physical and emotional preparations for going overseas. The topics are listed in logical order of steps to follow. You are responsible for ensuring you are prepared for your departure.

### Media Support

After your selection, Jamaican Self-Help may do a variety of communication initiatives to let people in your area know about your placement. This will help raise the awareness of JSH in your community and might make your fundraising a little easier. Writing an article for your local paper or providing a news clip for a local radio station can help bring about community awareness. Be sure to highlight what you will be doing, who will be participating on the trip, when the trip will take place and why you are participating.

*Special note:* When dealing with the media please remember that you are representing both yourself and the entire JSH organization. Consider the implications of what you might say.

### Cultural Information

As important as these factual/historical features are, there are additional things you will need to know to both gain and contribute the most during your placement. While you will go overseas with skills and insights to share, you will have to be able to know when and how to introduce them. It is important to remember that you, your host country and JSH all stand to benefit most if you are able to marry your Canadian know how with the indigenous knowledge and cultural customs of your placement country. In other words, you should be both student and teacher during your placement.

### Sources for Information

#### Media

- Look for television and radio programs on various issues pertaining to Jamaica. The chances are best of finding such programming on public stations, whether provincial or national, the CBC or Vision TV.

#### Popular Culture

- Reading novels written by Jamaican authors, as well as other books written by people who have visited there
- Visit a Jamaican restaurant
- Listen to Jamaican music
- Check out movies set in Jamaica or documentaries
- Meet some people from Jamaica

## Indigenous Decision Making Processes

If you find yourself not understanding the complexity of certain decisions and projects:

- Never lose sight of the fact that your number one priority is to gain cultural awareness and understanding of the development process.
- Use the experience to observe how one organization makes its decisions and what you might do to improve export opportunities.

## Organizational Codes of Conduct

Another aspect of working in a new cultural environment that can cause some frustration is a clash of work values. For anyone working outside their own country there are often aspects of local organizational culture - the way of doing things - that might seem strange, or even corrupt to you. Most of the people in Jamaica will go to great lengths to accommodate visitors, such as yourself, and ignore the occasional cultural mistakes. Still, understanding and adjusting to local culture is crucial to a successful work placement. Being unaware of how you are interacting with local counterparts can be just as detrimental to establishing long term linkages as offering the wrong services.

However, there are some general pointers that we can give you, some of which may require a real effort on your part:

- Be prepared to make mistakes, and be embarrassed
- Watch and listen to how people are interacting around you. See how people dress for different occasions, the level of their speech, the distance they keep from one another, the things they talk about, and do not talk about.
- Note how people greet each other, exchange business cards or gifts, etc.
- Feel confident enough to ask a lot of questions not only of your own (Canadian) colleagues but also of the local people you come into contact with. Let them know the aspects of local culture that are causing you difficulty.
- This will not only show people that you are trying to bridge a very difficult cultural gap - something they may not even be aware of themselves - but will also give them some insight into what life is like in Canada. They may also find it interesting to hear what it is like being a stranger in their country. They may have much more experience being a stranger in foreign countries than being a host in their own.

## 8.4 What to Bring on Awareness Trips

### Official Documents: Passports

All JSH participants should obtain a passport as soon as possible. Always keep your passport in a safe place and don't carry it with you if you don't need to (to the beach, to the market etc.) Your passport is required as identification when you cash traveler's cheques. If you lose your passport, report this immediately to the nearest Canadian embassy. The requirements for a replacement are the same as obtaining an original in Canada, so it would be useful to have your birth certificate with you as well as a photocopy of your passport.

### Gifts for Hosts

It is always good practice to travel with small gift items to exchange for things you want to take home, or as thanks for the hospitality of your hosts. This requires some careful thought and consideration about what might make appropriate gifts.

The following are a few common gift ideas:

- Canadian calendars
- Canadian pocket books
- Canadian lapel pins
- Baseball/basketball caps and T-shirts
- Canadian magazines
- Canadian postcards
- Canadian pens, flag pins
  - Canadian music

### Beneficial Skills and Values

Here are the skills, which have shown to be the most important for survival in a foreign environment:

- Non-judgmental attitude
- Open mindedness
- Respect
- Empathy
- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Tolerance for differences
- Ability to communicate
- Flexibility
- Adaptability
- Sense of humour
- Motivation
- Forgiveness
- Ability to fail

## 8.5 Culture Shock Information and Handouts

*Culture shock is the term used to refer to one's reaction to entering a new environment where one set of values, norms and expectations comes face to face with another. In such a situation things are unpredictable, uncertain and ambiguous. It is often impossible to understand a particular situation or read the unspoken clues. For this reason, it is important for you to be prepared to respond to various forms and degrees to culture shock.*

### Defining Culture Shock

Culture is the total way of life of any particular group of people, their customs, language, shared attitudes and feelings. Cultural values and biases are so ingrained and natural to each of us that we are usually quite unaware of them. Every cultural group thinks that its way of thinking or doing things is common sense and the best way possible. The difficulty of adapting to a new culture should never be underestimated. Adapting to a foreign culture is always a major cause of stress. "Culture shock" is the term used to refer to one's reaction to entering a new environment where things are unpredictable, uncertain and ambiguous, and where it is often impossible to understand a particular situation or read the unspoken clues. Unlike the diseases for which you can be vaccinated or immunized, culture shock is non-preventable. Everyone who travels to another country is subject to it, varying degrees of intensity. It does not strike suddenly or have a single principal cause. It is cumulative, building up slowly from a series of small events that are difficult to identify.

### The Causes of Culture Shock

- Being cut off from familiar cultural cues and known patterns, especially the subtle, indirect ways people have of expressing and receiving feelings, which make life comprehensible.
- Living for an extended time with ambiguity.
- Having your own values brought into question.
- Being put in a situation where we are perceived and perceive ourselves differently
- Being put in situations where skill and speed are expected but the rules have not been well explained
- Being removed from our support systems

### Factors Influencing the Severity of Cultural Shock

The symptoms of culture shock are the same for any major changes in one's life; feeling helpless, fearful, empty, despairing, pessimistic, irritable, angry, guilty and restless. You may also experience a loss of concentration, hope, motivation and energy. It can even alter your habits, such as eating (e.g. loss of appetite) and sleeping patterns. A tendency to be more fatigued, error prone and slower in speech and movement is also

possible. This may be compounded with a lack of self-tolerance (e.g. "I thought I was so ready for this - what's my problem?"). There are three factors, which can increase or decrease the severity of the change that you are going through:

- Magnitude: How significant was the change? How many areas of your life were affected?
- Expectations: Were the changes expected or unexpected? Were you able to prepare for them in any way?
- Making the necessary changes or adaptations to your new cultural environment can be a serious struggle.

### Emotional Phases of Culture Shock

Whatever the sources or nature of your particular culture shock, and whatever the magnitude, generally there are three emotional phases people go through when going through culture shock, including:

- Denial: "This is a great place to be. I'm having a great time. Great food, great music. Everything's wonderful"
- Anger/Depression: "So when does my work start? Why don't they create a sanitation system? When does this heat end?"
- Acceptance: "Today I think I will have lunch with John. Maybe I'll have a chat with Ellen at work today."

### Getting over Culture Shock

Culture shock progresses slowly. At first, one may be impressed by the "quaintness" of perceived differences. But the quaintness is short-lived, and the differences themselves become important - in some cases even overwhelming. Then often follows a process of focusing on a few differences (e.g. standards of cleanliness, attitudes towards punctuality) and blowing them up out of proportion.

### Three Steps to Preparing for Culture Shock

Culture shock is not something you can prevent but there are steps you can take to diminish its effects. Remember, the sooner you adapt to your new social and physical environment the sooner you can begin contributing to, and benefiting from your overseas placement. The following three steps will help you prepare for the culture shock you will face and, hopefully, minimize its effects.

#### **Step One: Creating a Personality Profile**

Each country has its own culture(s) and you want to make sure that you are sensitive to these. It will be important for you to learn as much as possible about people's attitudes and customs and about certain values and issues, assessing how these may be different from your own; and knowing how to respond without offending. Imagine what your responses could be if the people you work and live with in your host country have different ideas on some of the following issues:

- Social Issues
- Political Issues
- Development Issues
- Gender Equality
- Democracy
- What is wealth?
- The Elderly
- Human Rights
- What constitutes employment?
- Child Labour
- The State/Government
- Consumerism
- Access to education
- Militarism
- Free Trade
- Housing
- Environmentalism
- Attitudes on business
- Violence
- Sovereignty vs. Globalization
- What causes poverty?

### **Step Two: Assessing Your Capacity to Communicate**

One area where cultural differences can cause problems is in verbal communication. The degree to which you are able to adapt to the way local people converse will give you a good indication of how adaptive you will be to other cultural differences.

### **Step Three: Identifying your Short and Long-Term Goals**

Making personal goals before going to volunteer overseas is an important part of surviving culture shock. If you can give focus to the experience, allowing you to put some of the more difficult aspects of working and living in Jamaica into a broader perspective.

## Culture Shock

Culture shock is a term used to refer to one's reaction upon entering a new environment where norms, values, and expectations are different. Culture shock is how you relate to these opposing values. Cultural values and traditions are so ingrained in us that we barely notice them, therefore when we go somewhere where these are different we suddenly become aware. Adapting to a foreign culture can be a major form of stress, which is why it is important to be prepared.

There are three factors, which can increase or decrease the severity of the change that you are going through:

- Magnitude: How significant was the change? How many areas of your life were affected?
- Expectations: Were the changes expected or unexpected? Were you able to prepare for them in any way?
- Making the necessary changes or adaptations to your new cultural environment can be a serious struggle.

### Emotional Phases of Culture Shock

Whatever the source of your culture shock or whatever the magnitude there are usually three emotional phases that you go through when experiencing culture shock. Including:

- Denial
- Anger/Depression
- Acceptance

## Steps to Prepare for Culture Shock

Culture shock is not something you can prevent, but it is something you can prepare for. With good preparation you can diminish the effects it has on you. The sooner you adapt to your new environment the sooner you can begin contributing to and benefiting from your overseas placement.

### **Step One:** Create a personality profile:

Each country has its own culture(s) and you want to make sure that you are sensitive to them. It is important to learn as much as you can about people's attitudes, customs, certain values and issues that are important to them before your departure. Assessing how these may be different from your own will help.

### **Step Two:** Assessing your capacity to communicate:

Communication is key when traveling in foreign destinations. The degree to which you are able to adapt to the way local people converse will give you a good indication of how well you will do with other cultural differences.

### **Step Three:** Identifying your short and long term goals:

Making personal goals is important when traveling overseas for volunteer work. It is an integral part to surviving culture shock. If you can give focus to the experience, which will allow you to put some of the more difficult aspects of working and living in Jamaica into a broader perspective. This will help you to understand the effects of the culture shock better because you will have a greater understanding of it and why you are there.



## 8.6 Cultural Awareness

### Health

Expect to suffer from at least some degree of "culture shock". Don't plan on being too physically active in your first few days, and don't be surprised when you find yourself retiring for the evening at 8:00 p.m. due to exhaustion from the climate.

### Water

Normally, drinking water in Jamaica is of a very high quality and is quite safe to drink. However, you may feel more comfortable boiling your drinking water. Usually there will be notices about this in the local paper.

### Fruits and Vegetables

Remember that toxic sprays are constantly used to control pests and this is the main reason why all fruits and vegetables should be washed.

### Swimming

When swimming or wading off a beach, avoid stepping on the long black spines of sea urchins. They become imbedded in the foot, are next to impossible to remove and can become painfully infected. Ammonia can help dissolve the spines. You should never wade or swim in stagnant pools as these can carry various parasitic diseases.

### Coping with the Heat

Two common sense tips, when living in tropical or sub-tropical areas, are:

1. try to take regular, vigorous exercise and remember to drink plenty of fluids throughout the day
2. use a sunscreen of no less than 15 SPF (sun protection factor) when out in the direct sun and avoid being in the sun between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

### Bugs and Insects

**Use of insect repellent is recommended on a daily basis**

If you become ill, here are some tips:

- Most stomach illnesses Canadians get abroad are painful but short-term
- Do not panic, and prepare to be in some discomfort for a few days
- Drink fluids to hydrate yourself, but try to stick to bottled water. If none is available, try drinks made with processed water, including soft drinks
- Avoid juice drinks and salads (vegetables are washed in water)
- Even if you feel your illness is minor, if the condition persists for more than three or four days, see the in-country doctor with whom JSH is connected

**UWI (University of the West Indies) Hospital has an excellent 24 hour emergency clinic, Mona Campus, Kingston - Phone 927-1620.**

## Safety and Security Tips

- Jamaica, like many countries of the world, has more than its share of crime problems. For your personal safety, here is some realistic and common sense guidelines to follow during your stay there.
- Transportation will always be pre-arranged by your co-ordinator and leader. Never travel alone. Solicitation of money by children and others is not uncommon in Jamaica; it is your decision whether or not to give them small change.
- Certain areas of Kingston are dangerous for outsiders and must be avoided. Drivers of taxis, friends and other people can usually advise you as to the relative safety of a particular area. Never wander around exploring without an experienced person.
- Follow your instinct. If you feel uncomfortable in any given situation, then act accordingly. Don't be careless with your handbag or briefcase; carry it close to your body with the latch side facing in. Men should keep wallets in their front pockets. Shoulder bags should be held tightly under the arm. Backpacks can be carried on your front when in crowded places. Stand away from the curb while waiting to cross the street.
- Remember that traffic moves on the left. Look right, then left and then right again.
- Avoid wearing ostentatious or valuable jewelry in public.
- Never carry more than you can afford to lose. Always carry some form of I.D. Passports should be kept in a safe place.
- Always avoid known demonstrations, rallies or other events where there is potential for trouble.
- If you should be accosted, report such incidents to the police and the Canadian High Commission Security Officer, as soon as possible.
- As a visitor from a foreign country, you may be afforded a level of privilege that many local citizens might not enjoy. The reasons why you may be extended such a privilege are varied, and can include a generally high level of respect that many people in the south have for so called "Westerners", especially those who come to work in their countries. You may also enjoy a level of status because of your affiliation with Jamaican Self-Help, and through them, local and international government agencies.
- It is also quite common for people in the south, and especially younger people in rural areas, to hold Westerners with a degree of awe; often this relates to the perception of the West as a place of material wealth and political power.

- Finally, because of Canada's traditional internationalist policies and non-colonial history (at least outside of Canada), Canadians are often afforded a higher degree of respect than visitors from other countries. On the other hand, there is a possibility that your Canadian nationality will give you a status that will not bring you privilege, but rather criticism.

Although the chances of anything severe occurring are remote indeed, it is a fact that local petty criminals, scam artists, and even some officials will see you as a target. For these people, your wealth may seem as an opportunity to gain money, valued articles or even favours that could improve their lives, if even temporarily. For people with a sense of history and, perhaps, resentment are strong, it is possible that your presence may be perceived as yet another example of foreign intervention. In the event that you experience some animosity from local people, here are some things to keep in mind:

- No matter how "normal" or "non-privileged" you see yourself at home, in Jamaica you may stick out like the proverbial sore thumb.
- Be aware that you are seen as someone who is from a wealthy country. Whether it is a passport, money or personal belongings (Walkman, watch, camera etc.), take special precautions with valuable articles and store them in a secure place during the day (e.g. your hotel's safe) or at least locked in your backpack.
- With regard to your money, keep a separate record of your traveller's cheques and credit cards. Never carry your passport, travel tickets, identification documents, cash, credit cards and insurance papers together. If you do so, you risk being left with no identification or funds.
- While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws and regulations. Your Canadian citizenship offers no immunity. More than 1,400 Canadians are currently imprisoned abroad for various offences.
- Before travelling to a foreign country, always familiarize yourself with the laws and way of life there.
- Respect that country's laws, religions, culture, class structure and economic conditions. Though you may not personally agree with some of their beliefs, remember that you are a visitor.

## 8.7 Codes of Conduct Handouts

### Photography

When taking photographs, it is important to consider the sensitivity of others. It often helps to ask yourself "How would I feel if someone photographed me in my back yard or waiting in a train station or visiting the church of my choice?" The crucial questions in photography overseas are "where?" and "when?"

Therefore, it is best to hold back on your picture taking until you feel that you know the local ground rules.

A significant cultural implication of picture taking is invasion of other people's privacy. If you feel you must take pictures of people engaged in activities they may consider private, be aware that your actions may negatively affect relations between different cultural groups - those who have cameras and those who don't. Your photography can be less obtrusive with the use of long distance lenses, but you need to decide whether the invasion of privacy is ultimately good or bad.

One pitfall to avoid is that of taking pictures that conform to your preconceived notion of what the country is like. Take pictures that show both the good and the bad, the poor and the comfortably off, the sad and those experiencing genuine joy. It may be helpful to delay picture taking until you have learned to discriminate between sensational images and the true characteristic images of the area.

### Taking Precautions

- Always add up your bills to see if you get the same total.
- Be careful about wearing nice necklaces or watches around downtown.
- Don't hang your arm out of bus windows when you are waiting to leave. Someone may tear your watch or jewellery off your arm.
- Padlocks or small travel combination locks can be useful for lockers, or for locking your bags to something (or each other) so they don't go walking when you have your head turned for a second. Local thieves may have lots of practice picking the cheaper locally available locks.
- Con people may approach you on city street with imaginative stories - they are "refugees" about to be deported back to certain death; they are kids asking for donation for their football; they are students raising money to study in your country. Some of the stories are real; others are just stories.
- Get a local person to take you to the market and tell you what things really cost.
- Be prepared for public transportation that is crowded beyond your Canadian imagination

- Be careful about pickpockets. (Velcro your pockets).
- Be careful, especially in the cities, about total strangers who suddenly want to get to know you. This does not mean that you have to ignore everyone who says something to you - just be careful.
- Always look like you know where you are going, even if you don't.
- Watch that you don't get overcharged on vehicles or in the market. Watch to see what others are paying first. Keep a good supply of small change so that you don't have to pay in large bills. Don't flash your money around, or the price goes up!
- The less you take with you, the less you'll be worried about losing. In any event, you don't have to be paranoid, just be careful and aware.
- If it comes down to it, your personal safety is more important than your property safety.

### Dress Code For Leaders and Participants

One of the main ways a visitor can show respect for Jamaican life is by adhering strictly to the conservative and covered policy about dress that has been developed by Jamaican Self-Help over many years of experience.

This dress code does not tell you what should be worn, but rather what is absolutely unacceptable and cannot be worn if you wish to be a part of Jamaican Self-Help Awareness Trips.

In the Northern Hemisphere, where there are long seasons of cold and snow, the impulse of people is to take clothes off when warm weather arrives. Not so in the South, which knows only warm weather. A clear sign that a person is from another part of the world is the manner of their dress. Most Jamaican women wear skirts "on the street", that is, out in public, going to work, on buses, shopping, walking etc. We visitors want to appear as integrated as possible for many reasons - respect for local custom, our own safety and good taste. Brief clothing is considered something of an invitation to men to show unwanted and disrespectful interest in women.

### **The Code**

For these reasons, Jamaican Self-Help requires that participants bring a modest swimsuit, Bermuda shorts for recreational wear, a lightweight bathrobe, skirts (2 are usually enough) or culottes, and at least one dress (for church, concerts etc.) and tops with sleeves. This eliminates tank tops, shoestring tops, sleeveless tops, short skirts and any other type of provocative, tight fitting, revealing, sheer or see-through clothing.

### Cultural Biases and Prejudices

Regardless of your class or racial background, remember that just because biases and prejudices are rarely talked about does not mean that they do not exist, or that they vanish when you leave Canada. We all have some bias and prejudice. You may travel to Jamaica thinking that

you are free of racial or cultural biases, only to find them surfacing under the stresses of working and living in a strange environment.

### Personal Relationships

Participants will be away from the influences of family, friends and their own culture. This presents a tremendous opportunity for growth, to experience new ways of relating to other people, and perhaps of having people relate to you in a different way.

Being in a far away place can be an extremely romantic experience. Add to this, freedom from the controls of home, and a pinch of loneliness, and you have the makings of a classic romance novel. But this is real life and your life.

We are not trying to completely discourage such relationships; there are many cases of Canadians establishing long-lasting intimate relationships with people they meet overseas. We would, however, strongly urge you to think about both the implications of such relationships, including both the emotional impact on everyone involved (including friends and family) and possible health concerns (e. g. STDs, AIDS, pregnancy etc.). If you are trying to come to grips with such a situation, discuss the issue with your leader.

### Sexual Harassment

By Canadian standards, sexual harassment is: **any discomfort through physical contact (unwanted touching, sexual advances, rape), verbal communication (innuendo, noises, phrases, propositions), mental attitude (treated as an object), and psychological imposition (staring, gestures).**

Whether the incidence of sexual harassment is higher in other societies than in Canada is very difficult to say, and it is always problematic to invest too much in stereotypes or generalizations about other cultures. What we can say is that you begin to feel that you might be a victim of sexual harassment when overseas it can cause even higher levels of frustration than you might experience back home in Canada.

Obviously, anyone experiencing sexual harassment is going to feel frustrated no matter where they are, but two things can make the situation worse when abroad. The first relates to situations in which you feel strongly that you are being sexually harassed, but do not know what to do in response. The other common situation that can cause frustration is the cultural gap, which may make it very difficult for you to even determine whether or not you are being sexually harassed. As we have said, it is virtually guaranteed that you will experience some confusion when learning about the cultural norms of your host country.

While it is impossible to say what the odds are that you will experience sexual or other forms of harassment, the chances are excellent that you will at least experience feelings of ambiguity as to just what is happening to you. If you start feeling confused about issues as serious as harassment, you will need to discuss them with your trip leaders, who may know more about local customs, and how to respond effectively to them.

## 8.8 Sample Briefing Session

### Sample #1 Briefing Session on Development Issues

(created and facilitated by Marisa)

#### Goals

- to understand better the realities of “Third World” countries (especially Jamaica)
- to examine responses to poverty - from charity to justice
- to explore why participants are going to Jamaica - their expectations and concerns
- to discuss what they may encounter and how to respond appropriately
- to continue to develop group dynamics

#### Activities

1. Introductions/Agenda Review (5min)
2. Warm-up Activity- go round of names and colours associated with each person (neighbour introduces you) (15min)
3. Brainstorm images/ideas of “Jamaica”
  - record on flipchart (5min)
4. Focus on Poverty (35min)
  - Poverty here/poverty there discussion page (see in global education file)
    - in pairs answer the questions (10min)
    - share ideas with large group (10min)
  - root causes of poverty - web chart of root causes with whole group
    - note similarities/differences between Canada and Jamaica
    - note history etc. of Jamaica (15min)
5. Responses to Poverty (To Needs) (30min)
  - Parable of ‘Babies in the River’ (see in global education file)
    - Read story aloud - discuss questions 1-4 (10min)
  - Review ideas of Charity/Direct Service and of Justice/Structural work

- (biblical examples of good Samaritan and of Moses)(5min)
- Review poverty web chart  
What activities fall in categories of charity  
and of justice (further upstream)?  
Canadian examples of Food Bank and Collective  
kitchens (15min)

Break – Energizer (10min)

6. Rocks & Staffs Exercise (55min)

- Rocks - in groups of 3 or pairs,  
identify 3 concerns/rocks you have in going  
to Jamaica (10min)
- post and cluster responses (5min)
- pick any 2-3 which can be role played  
and/or discussed - what can we do? (20min)
- Staffs - continue discussion on all rocks  
of what STAFFS/supports the group can  
have to address the concerns  
(suggestion of the support teams) (20min)

*Suggestion - repeat this exercise before returning home*

7. Next Steps

- After the trip - review idea of charity/justice
- challenge group to come up with longer term  
commitments - other logistical information

## **Sample #2 Briefing Session on Development Issues** **Adult Group**

Materials Needed: photos, paper, pencils, flipchart, markers, tape,  
slides, Babies Story

Objectives:

- to explore cross-cultural issues including stereotyping,  
assumptions, etc
- to identify and address areas of participant concern
- to identify the charity-justice elements of development work
- to identify key areas that each participant will follow throughout  
their trip

1. Introduction: 3 PIECES OF INFORMATION (15MIN)



- One Thing You Know about Jamaica,
  - One Thing You Would like to Know Before Going
  - One Thing You Would like to Know by the End of the Trip
2. Photo Games (15-20MIN)
    - What Are Our Assumptions?
  3. Expectations of Life in Jamaica (15MIN)
    - (Refer to Intro Activity, Brainstorm Other Ideas)
    - Concerns Sheet
  4. Slides and Descriptions/Discussion (30MIN)
    - Acting on Our Assumptions
    - Addressing Our Concerns
    - Behaviour Do's and Don'ts
    - Taking Pictures, Other (See Article on Tourism)
  5. Babies Down the Water (15MIN)
    - Development - Charity/justice
    - What Does International Development Mean to You?  
Why go on this Trip? (Immediate Need/longer Term)
  6. Key Interests (15MIN)
    - Areas to Learn about
    - Brainstorm
    - Match Individuals with Key Areas

**Briefing with St. FX Group**  
*November 26, 2000 (1 – 5 p.m.)*  
*Antigonish, NS*

**Objectives :**

- Orientation to JSH & distribute forms
- History and background of Jamaica
- Begin self-assessment process
- Discuss payment schedule and potential fundraising activities
- Outline placements, review form, discuss context of placements
- Basics of Cultural Adaptation

**Agenda:**

1. Introductions/ Agenda Review (5 min)
2. Warm –up Activity – go round of names \*\*\*(10min)
3. 3 pieces of information (record on flipchart)(15min)
  - 1 thing you know about Jamaica
  - 1 thing you would like to know before going

- 1 thing you would like to know by the end of the trip.
- 4. Introduction to the JSH Program
  - Work of the organization (5min)
  - Purpose of the awareness trips-solidarity , to learn (5min)
- 5. “Poverty Here/Poverty There” Discussion Page
  - in pairs answer questions (10min)
  - share ideas with large group (10min)
- 6. Roots causes of poverty
  - Wed Chart (whole group)\*\*\*(5min)
  - Note the Similarities/Differences between Canada and Jamaica(5min)
  - Note history of Jamaica \*(15min)
- 7. Break –energizer\*\*\*( & pick up forms)
- 8. General Program Outline
  - Review “basic” schedule –educational sessions , placements , flexibility (5min)
  - Review guide

## 8.9 Activities and Handouts for Briefing Sessions

### A Parable of Good Works

Once upon a time there was a small village on the edge of a river. The people there were good and life in the village was good. One day a villager noticed a baby floating down the river. The villager quickly jumped into the river to save the baby from drowning.

The next day the same villager was walking along the riverbank and noticed two babies in the river. He called for help, and both babies were rescued from the swift waters. And the following day four babies were seen caught in the turbulent current. And then eight, then more, and still more.

The villagers organized themselves quickly, setting up watch towers and training teams of swimmers who could resist the swift waters and rescue the babies. Rescue squads were soon working 24 hours a day. And for each day the number of helpless babies floating down the river increased.

The villagers organized themselves efficiently. The rescue squads were now snatching many children each day. Groups were trained to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Others prepared formula and provided clothing for the chilled babies. Many were involved in making clothing and knitting blankets. Still others provided foster homes and placement.

While not all babies, now very numerous, could be saved, the villagers felt they were doing well to save as many babies as they could each day. Indeed, the village priest blessed them in their good work. And life in the village continued on that basis.

One day, however, someone raised the question, "But where are all these babies coming from? Who is throwing them into the river? Why? Let's organize a team to go upstream and see who's doing it." The seeming logic of the elders countered: "And if we go upstream who will operate the rescue operations? We need every concerned person here."

"But don't you see," cried the one lone voice, "if we find out who is throwing them in, we can stop the problem and no babies will drown. By going upstream we can eliminate the cause of the problem."

"It is too risky."

And so the numbers of babies in the river increase daily. The numbers saved increase, but the numbers who drown increase ever more.

'See Leaven Program for Social Justice'  
One World Research and Education Network  
By Janice Brown

Questions:

1. What is the moral of this parable? How does it reflect the global picture?

In the face of human need people respond:

- Direct Service – programs to aid suffering and needy people
  - Changing Structures – trying to change the causes of suffering, not only helping the victims but also changing arrangements, which have made persons into victims. The accomplishment of structural change requires new attitudes and new structures.
  - Structural change concerns itself with the organization, the policies, and with the behaviour of institutions, governments, programs, laws, business, finance, education, health care and public welfare. The interactions of these social arrangements are often called systems or structures.
2. Are both direct service and structural change necessary to the babies?
3. Do you think people involved in one response might think the other was counterproductive?

<b>Cultural Universals</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Jamaica</b>
<b>1. Material Culture:</b> (food, clothing and adornments, tools and weapons, housing and shelter, transportation, personal possessions, household articles)		
<b>2. The Arts, Play and Recreation</b> (forms of entertainment, play, sport, folk art and fine art, standards of beauty and taste)		
<b>3. Communication</b> (nonverbal, language, literature)		
<b>4. Social Organization</b> (sex roles, families, social groups, societies, patterns of inclusion and exclusion)		
<b>5. Social Control</b> (governments, institutions, systems, rewards and punishments)		
<b>6. Conflict</b> (kinds of conflict, methods of resolution, including warfare)		
<b>7. Economic Organization</b> (trade and exchange systems, production and manufacturing, property and division of labour)		

8. Education (formal and alternative)		
9. World View (beliefs and mores, religion, world order)		

(adapted from the Leaven Program, by Janice Brown, 1992)

### Identifying Developmental Issues

1. Based on your observations and comparisons of Canada and Jamaica, identify one key area to assess as a North/South Issue. Consider both the Northern interests as well as the Southern interests.

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2. Are there economic gains for either country? (who owns, who controls, who pays, who gets)

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3. What cultural values influence this issue? (what values, what do people believe, who influences what people believe)

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4. Does social grouping (ethnic, racial class, age, sex group) effect this issue? (who is left out, who is included, what is the basis for exclusion or inclusion)

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5. What political decisions impact on this issue? (who decides what for whom, how does the deciding get done, who has the power)

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6. Do religious beliefs influence this issue? (what beliefs or practices support or challenge this situation)

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**What are your values?**

<u>Personality Trait/Value</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Low</u>
Affection, companionship			
Intimacy, love relationship			
Family			
Duty, Service			
Traditions			
Clear communications			
Gregarious, outgoing			
Expertise, having skills & knowledge			
Prestige, becoming well known			
Leadership, influence, power			
Economic Security			
Independence, freedom of thought & action			
Pleasure, enjoying life, being content			
Self-realization, personal development			
Altruism, contributing to others			
Global awareness & action			
Spirituality			
Awareness of others, sensitive			
Physical appearance, body image			
Possessions			
Valuing diversity, multiculturalism			
Privacy, need of space			
Free time			
Other:			
Other:			

**Journal questions:** Your personality and international work

Look at the list you have filled out. In some situations personality traits that you consider an asset in the Canadian context might not be so in another. For example, if you ranked yourself high for leadership what would you do if, rather than deferring to you and your opinions, people in your host country prefer a more consensual or collective approach to decision making? Will you be sensitive to this, or will you run the risk of offending someone by talking a lot, and pushing your own ideas and values too far? Before you travel, think about the aspects of your personality that you value most and imagine situations where they might not be an asset.

## Communicating Across Cultures (samples of conversation)

The list below provides just a few examples of some possible differences in the way people from different parts of the world communicate. After reading the list, explore the questions that follow.

- Mr. Zhabori In his culture is it considered impolite to look directly at the person you are talking with.
- Mrs. Montza In her culture it is natural to speak before the other person has completed their sentence.
- Mr. Twani In his culture, people speak very loudly.
- Ms. Booloo In her culture, anything louder than a whisper is considered to be rude.
- Mr. Dribi In his culture, people don't show their teeth, so you cover your mouth with your hand when you speak.
- Mrs. Zwam In her culture, idle chit-chat is considered a waste of time, and is discouraged by smiling and being silent.
- Mr. Gunu In his culture, shaking your head means you are listening intently, so of course, you shake your head often.
- Ms. Kibba In her culture, people say greetings several times throughout all conversation (e.g. How are you? How is your family? How is your work?)
- Mr. Jova In his culture, you begin a conversation by shaking hands, then don't let go until the conversation is over.
- Mr. Tramma In her culture, intensely staring and frowning in concentration are indications that you are listening carefully.
- Mr. Bathib In his culture, people use their hands and arms to emphasize points rather than their voice.
- Ms. Griss In her culture, people speak with as high a voice as possible, because it is seen as a gentle way of speaking.
- Ms. Syrabia In his culture, it is natural to consider another's words very carefully. Thus, you wait 5 seconds before replying.

**Journal Questions:** How would you react to these different forms of communication? To get an indication, look at your self-assessment list once again. How did you rank yourself for awareness to others and sensitivity? Will you have been aware if people are communicating in a different way? Look at how you ranked yourself for self-realization and independence. If you sense that someone was using a different style of communication than yours, would you be the kind of person who would think it necessary to adapt, or would you expect others to change for you?



## A guide to self-taught skills and cross-cultural communication

What motivates people determines whether or not real communication is possible. A sensitive, observant human being can acquire insights into the unique ways in which different cultures operate. There are several strategies you can use. First, you need to know your own culture before you can see below the surface of another. Only if you know what the value priorities are for your own society can you begin to grasp the meaning of differences in another and to realize the impact these differences may have on you. For example, only if you are aware of the role competitiveness plays in Canadian schooling, sports, business and politics, are you apt to be alert to the many manifestations of its absence in a culture that believes an individual victor offends all those who lose. Self-knowledge is, of course, a rare wisdom. Nonetheless, there are some easy to detect concepts inherent in the North American "view of life" which influence each of us to some degree, whether we are from Vancouver or Halifax. A most helpful technique for learning about other groups is to list questions, which will focus your observations on the most likely points of cultural difference and then seek answers.

Below, are two very general value-set groupings. We generally find most difficulties revolve around different assumptions concerning the five areas listed. Of course, you may very well find that you have values listed in both groups, and that it is frustrating to try to place yourself within one set exclusively. This is not a problem. However, it is also possible that you will more readily identify with one set or the other, and virtually guaranteed that in the first days of your placement you will probably see the people there in very general terms and thus as falling into one of the two groups. The reason is that whenever we are in a new, often confusing situation, we try to simplify the things around us to make sense of the world. What then becomes the issue is how we see ourselves, and specifically, our values in relation to those of the people around us. Once again, understanding what views and values we travel with can help us respond less defensively to new situations.

## Values Exercise

### Value Set "A"

### Value Set "B"

#### 1. Individual Versus Group/Family/Organization

(a) Individual is perceived as a separate entity group/family/organization

(a) Individual perceived in context

(b) Individual responsibility is

(b) Involvement and dependence most important on group/family/organization

(c) Decisions must involve the affected as much as older respected members of the possible family

(c) Decisions must involve the individual

#### 2. Acceptance of Others

(a) Relating to others in terms of people in their roles

(a) Reacting to other terms of the whole person, not the role

(b) Not needing to like, or agree with someone to avail themselves of his/her services (e.g. student/teacher)

(b) Accepting or rejecting others completely and have difficulty working with those who are unacceptable.

#### 3. Social Relations

(a) Difference in status, etc. are minimized to make others feel comfortable

(a) Differences in status and hierarchical rank are noted and stressed.

(b) A direct, informal style of communication is also used to achieve the same result

(b) Communication follows a predictable formal series of steps which make others feel more comfortable

#### 4. Progress versus Fate

(a) Human beings are rational and can invent technology and development techniques to solve any problem.

(a) Human beings are perceived in a fatalistic manner and such things as disease and suffering Are accepted more easily.

## 5. Time

(a) Time is perceived in terms of clock time (supper is at 5:30 p.m.)

(a) Time is perceived in terms of the right time to do something (e.g. supper is whenever you eat, rather than you eat supper at a specific time)

(b) Time moves quickly from past to present to future.

(b) Time moves slowly, people must integrate themselves with the environment and adapt to it rather than change it.

(c) One must keep up with time and use it to change and master one's environment.

## County X-Land Development Assessment

X-Land is a landlocked country lying just north of the equator. It was colonized for nearly 70 years by France, and became independent in 1960. 5.1 million people live in X-Land. The population is growing so fast that it will probably double in 35 years. There is no government-sponsored family planning program. There are about 18 people per square kilometer on average, but most people live in the centre and south of the country where the rainfall is as high as 40 inches a year. Very few people live in the north, where there is mostly desert. 110,000 people live in the capital. Nine of ten people in X-Land live in the countryside and most of them grow all their own food, mainly cereals and some root crops. The rainy season is from May to November, with little or no rain in the rest of the year. During the rains, much of the water runs off and does not soak into the ground. Animals can be grazed and crops grown in the centre of the country. On the average, each farmer cultivates less than 2.5 acres and less than one fifth of the land is farmed and only one-fourth of that is farmed efficiently. Erosion is a problem because many people farm until the soil is exhausted. While the country used to export food, it now has to import it. Virtually all the export crops that were introduced during colonialism including cotton, rice, ground nuts and an oily fruit called karite are grown for sale. X-Land has some manganese and copper, and possibly other minerals, including bauxite (from which aluminum is made). The world price for manganese is very low, however, and there are still no plans to develop the large deposits. Many peasant families keep some poultry and the country's main wealth is its animals. There are 2.6 million cattle, 1.7 million sheep, 2.4 million goats, 250,000 horses and donkeys, 195,000 pigs, and some camels. Live animals constitute more than half the country's exports and thousands of them are walked hundreds of miles to the nearest market. To raise animals and look after them properly, people need plenty of water. But water is scarce, particularly during the dry season. People have tried to increase water supplies by building wells and dams. Every time the villagers drink this water, they risk getting several different diseases. There are villages where half the people are blind. When the last surveys were made, about nine years ago, they showed that people in X-Land could expect to live to be 31 years old. The biggest reasons for this are the high infant mortality and poor health care services available for the elderly. Large scale vaccination campaigns now help many people avoid smallpox, yellow fever and sleeping sickness, which has been widespread. But malaria, river blindness and tuberculosis are still common. During your placement you will be strategically placed to assess the local market conditions for the export of Canadian environmental technology. In keeping with CIDA's sustainability priorities, you will be assessing the market in relation to local environmental conditions and the people's relationship to the environment.

From the above description, list three themes in each of the following areas:

- The Environmental:   1.  
                                  2.  
                                  3.
- The Social               1.  
                                  2.  
                                  3.
- The Economic           1.  
                                  2.  
                                  3.

## 8.10 Placements

### Jamaican Self-Help Placement Opportunities

The majority of the following placements are funded through the Jamaican Self-Help development program. We have selected these sites because we believe our global education program is an extension of our development work in Jamaica. The two works are closely inter-related. By placing the participants in Jamaican Self-Help-Sponsored projects we hope to demonstrate this interconnectedness. We emphasize the mutuality of the North and South contribution and we offer a shared learning experience.

### General Information:

The placements are usually decided ahead of time mostly based on the need of the specific placement. Your interview will also help us to find a good match for you. It is important to know that an open mind, a sense of cultural humility and a flexible nature are keys to a successful experience. We emphasize that these trips are designed to give the participants a learning opportunity rather than an occasion for aid. This is a service-learning opportunity.

When your placement is identified and your role cleared you will be notified of the material that you need to take with you. Most of the time the supplies taken by the group will be sufficient.

You can communicate all your concerns about the placements with your Trip Leader or Coordinator. You can also share your experience with your fellow participants in the evening sessions. You are encouraged to maintain a daily log about your placement. This will help you to evaluate your experience, and us to evaluate the placement.

***Mona Common, Family Counseling and Williams Basic Schools:*** Basic schools are part of the educational system in Jamaica and their main role is to prepare the children between the ages of three to six for elementary school.

***Williams Basic School:*** is a relatively well maintained, 6-room school, located in South West Kingston. It has 8 teachers. The majority of the children come from low-income neighborhoods. Mrs. Williams is the principal of the school.

***Family Counseling Basic School:*** is a small, one-room basic school with three teachers, located in a community called White Wing. Eighty children are currently enrolled in this school but daily attendance is often lower. Children are mainly from the White Wing Community which, is a very poor community in West Kingston. Mrs. Cole is the principal of the school.

***Mona Common:*** is another basic school supported by Jamaican Self-Help located in East Kingston. Currently more than 100 children are enrolled in this school. The school although modest in its size and facilities has been exemplary in providing educational program for the children and parents of Mona Common Community. The community is a squatter community built across from the University of the West Indies. Ms. Pansy Matthews is the principal of the school

If you are placed in these basic schools, you will be assisting the teachers in organizing educational and recreational activities for children. Your responsibilities might vary from teaching children a song to teaching them basic literacy and numeracy skills.

***Saint Peter Claver Primary School:*** This school is located in southwest Kingston. The school has 25 teachers and the ratio of student/ teacher is 40/1. The school consists of three buildings. In this School the principal Ms. Margaret Bolt strongly encourages the Canadian volunteers to come prepared with a project in mind. These projects can vary from preparing the children for a play or a musical show to making a banner or a display. Discuss with trip leader or co-ordinator a suitable project.

***Stella Maris Training Center for Young Women:*** The center trains young women from Grant's Pen area of Kingston in employable skills such as cooking, baking and sewing. This is the placement for those who want to exchange their recipes for a culturally diverse menu, or teach embroidery or knitting. There is also a chance to help the young women with basic reading.

***S-Corner Clinic and Community Center:*** S-Corner is a community-based organization providing development projects to Bennet Land Community located in southwest Kingston. Among many projects offered by S-Corner, Jamaican Self-Help supports one project directly affecting the children in that community. Home Work Assistant Project provides children between the ages of 10-14 with assistance in improving their academic level through peer teaching by young adults. Canadian volunteers can engage in this activity. You will be assisting the teacher in the classroom and/or asked to assist in arranging recreational activities. This project is offered after school and sometimes there is a limitation for volunteer participation.

***St. Patrick's Foundation:*** The foundation offers a variety of opportunities in its different centers.

***Riverton Clinic:*** As part of St. Patrick's foundation, Riverton City Community is located in southwest Kingston. The community is formed on squatter land of five square miles and houses more than 8000 people. The clinic, although lacking the needed technical utilities, has been able to provide the community with basic immunization, medical advice and primary curative care. Placements for Canadian volunteers are limited. Usually one or two volunteer will be placed in Riverton Clinic to assist the practical nurse staff and the Canadian Volunteer nurses who staff the clinic for the months of February and March.

***Sea View Garden:*** offers an opportunity for small group remedial teaching of youth between the ages of 10-14.

***St. Monica's Home for the Age:***, is a residential care-center for 35 aged men and women. Some of the residents have suffered from Hansen's Disease. You will be asked mostly to participate in group activities such as singing and visiting and providing some simple care.

### **Other Placements**

The following projects are not part of Jamaican Self-Help development program. Because of their unique qualities they provide additional opportunities for the participants. Placements in these locations are subject to availability.

**Sophie's Place:** Made up of two day-centers for severely disabled children. Each center provides care and stimulation for 4-6 children. The volunteers are asked to assist the staff in care for these children. You need good physical stamina and a cheerful personality.

**Dupont School:** This primary school has 1400 students. The volunteers will assist with individual or small group remedial teaching in small groups.

### THE IDEAL PLACEMENT

In some cases, you might arrive in Jamaica to learn that your placement has been changed. This will be your first opportunity to show flexibility and adaptability. The experience at your placement in a host community is seen to be the most important element in gaining the insight needed to promote cultural awareness.

The ideal placement should have the following characteristics:

- the environment should be one which allows the participant to be exposed to a wide cross section of society.
- the work situation should be at the participant's level of competence and sufficient to make him or her feel somewhat useful; it should allow for interaction with work peers and benefit the community.
- the receiving placement should be generally prepared for the arrival of Canadian participants.

**JAMAICAN SELF-HELP**  
**AWARENESS TRIP PLACEMENTS**  
*(Insert date)*

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please number your first three choices:

We will do our best to accommodate you, but please remember we must be flexible.

Please return this sheet to your Trip Leader by \_\_\_\_\_

- S-Corner Clinic; working with children ages 8 to 11. One placement with an after-school program.
- Dupont Primary School; a large inner city school, has a remedial reading room and teacher, Miss Stewart; age group 4 to 11. Six placements; small groups of children needing help with arithmetic and reading.
- St. Peter Claver Primary School; age range 4 to 13. Four placements; classroom settings, with teachers who have worked with JSH before (first week only)
- Assisting nurse Nancy Postons of London, Ontario at Medical Clinic.
- Family Counseling Basic School; assisting teachers with activities for children ages 4 to 6.
- Mona Common Basic School; assisting teachers with activities for children ages 4 to 6.
- William's Basic School; assisting teachers with activities for children ages 4 to 6.
- Stella Maris training centre; assisting in teaching math, basic reading, or engage in cooking, baking and sewing training.
- Sea View Gardens; age range 4 to 13. Four placements; classroom settings, working with teachers on remedial teaching.
- St. Monica's Home for the Aged; providing some simple care or participating in group activities
- Sophie's Place; assist the staff in care for severely disabled children.
- I am open to any placement

Please do NOT place me at \_\_\_\_\_



## On Placement

When you first arrive at your placement, you should meet with your host to share and discuss each other's placement expectations.

You can't control a lot of the events that happen to you, particularly when you're in the new environment of being overseas. However, you have a tremendous control over how to react to them. Remind yourself of this as you ride the ups and downs of your placement. You will become aware of how culturally programmed we are to respond to certain situations in a certain way. Freeing ourselves from these automatic reactions can really free up our creativity in living our daily lives.

To an incredible extent, your placement (and life) is what you make it. Be ready to "create" your own experience, and be aware of the opportunities that surround you.

Consider collecting things to show people back home: copies of the daily paper or magazines, examples of local cloth and crafts, local cassettes or records, postcards of any things you can't photograph, novels and picture books, interesting implements etc.

Plan out your learning priorities early on, and what you really want to do during your stay. Time will pass very quickly.

You're going to need a lot of help with a lot of things overseas. It helps if you are not reluctant to observe first and ask for help.

Keep in touch with your family and friends back in Canada.

If problems arise at your placement, try to resolve them through discussion with your team leader or co-ordinator. Try to remember that these volunteers have put in a great deal of time to prepare for you.

## **Recommendations**

1. improve sections nine and ten of their manual
2. make sections eight, nine and ten into a freestanding manual
3. research more about the religion of Jamaica
4. make the rest of the manual that relates to the Global Education Awareness Trips more accessible for trip leaders (i.e. use a consistent font and format)

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