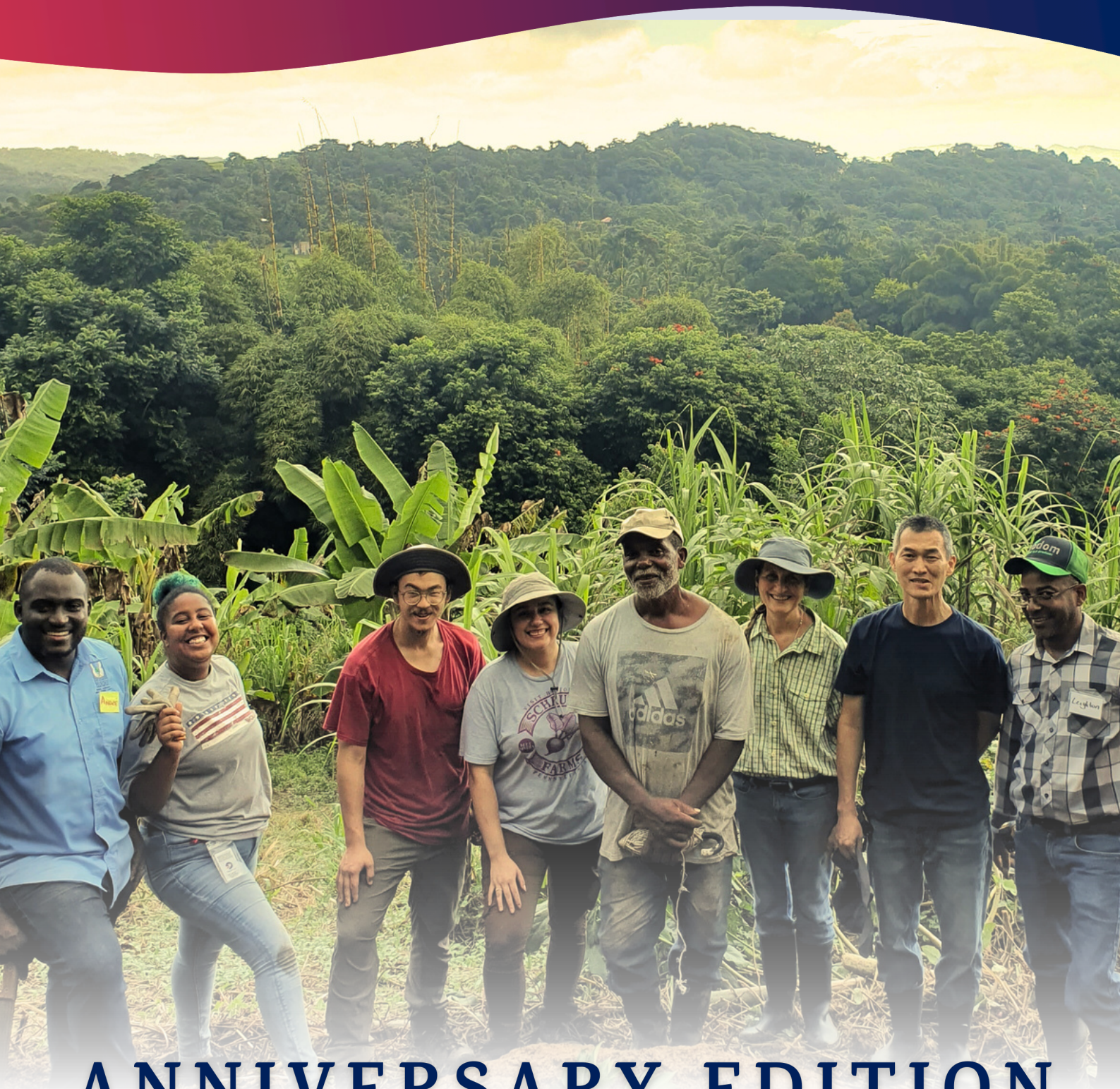


STAKEHOLDER REPORT



ANNIVERSARY EDITION



"Celebrating 60 years of partnership and friendship in Jamaica."

IN THIS GREAT FUTURE...



WE CAN'T FORGET
OUR PAST.





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A photograph of a banana plantation. Large, green banana leaves are prominent in the foreground and middle ground, some showing signs of aging or damage. A dirt path runs through the plantation, and the background shows more trees and a clear sky.

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CORPS

The Peace Corps partners with communities abroad to develop sustainable solutions for the world's greatest challenges by sharing America's most precious resource—its people. Peace Corps Volunteers carry out people-to-people public service and citizen diplomacy at the grassroots level. Drawn from all corners of the United States, Volunteers work across the globe to address challenges in agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health, and youth development. Volunteers return to the U.S. as global citizens with unique inter-cultural perspectives—as well as leadership, language, teaching, and community development skills that provide a competitive edge in today's global economy. Since 1961, over 220,000 Americans have served.

ABOUT PEACE



MISSION

**To promote world
peace and friendship**

OUR GOALS

1

Strengthen Local Capacity

Partner with the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained individuals.

2

Share America With the World

To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.

3

Bring the World Back Home

Promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the Americans.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

HIS EXCELLENCY THE MOST HONOURABLE SIR
PATRICK ALLEN ON, GCMG, CD, KStJ
GOVERNOR GENERAL



One year after the Peace Corps was established in the United States of America in March 1961, Jamaica received its first set of volunteers in February 1962. Since then, the volunteers have become a part of Jamaican society. The members of the Corps have provided valuable assistance and support, particularly in the areas of education, youth, health, the environment, agriculture, women empowerment, community development, and small enterprise development.

Over the past 60 years, more than 3,500 volunteers have served in Jamaica, and they have made outstanding contributions to our growth and development, especially in the rural communities. There are many inspiring ways in which the Peace Corps volunteers have made a difference in Jamaica and around the world through their work with individuals, institutions and organizations.

Despite the challenges which they have faced in villages, towns, and cities all over the world, the Volunteers continue to leave a legacy of hope and peace. Their service is motivated by love for the people of the countries where they are assigned and their desire to be of service to humanity.

Having closely interacted with Peace Corp volunteers, I am always amazed and impressed at the ease with which they adapt to, and assimilate Jamaican culture. They quickly become familiar with the communities where they are assigned, find their way around unaided and make friends with the residents, who are usually appreciative of their dedication and commitment.

Jamaica's celebration of its 60th Anniversary of Independence and the 60th Anniversary of the Peace Corp's presence in Jamaica is no small coincidence. Our Anniversary theme "Reigniting a Nation for Greatness" is an invitation to everyone, including the Volunteers who are our partners, to join us in powering our nation to greatness and excellence



MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

HIS EXCELLENCY N. NICK PERRY U.S. AMBASSADOR TO
JAMAICA 60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS IN
JAMAICA



To the Peace Corps Jamaica family, partners, and friends: Greetings!

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of partnership and friendship between the U.S. government and the people of Jamaica, there is much for which we should be thankful. Our ability to come together to protect and care for the people of Jamaica during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with renewed hope for future generations and many more years of collaborative partnership.

The commemoration of this milestone in your nation's history, inclusive of the customary jubilation and festivities, provides an invaluable opportunity for us to reflect and recommit ourselves to the continuous and crucial task of striving for world peace and friendship.

For over 60 years, Peace Corps volunteers have lived and worked in Latin and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, South Asia, and the South Pacific, serving in the poorest towns as well as rural villages. Everywhere they serve, they have a common purpose and common goals. President John F. Kennedy explained that purpose as contributing to world peace, and international understanding.

The goals were also three-fold. First, to improve the lives of people in developing countries, particularly among the most vulnerable communities. Second, to convey an understanding of the people of the United States, our values and our ideals, through the friendships and relationships that develop by living and working side by side with the people of other lands. Finally, to achieve the third goal which is cross-cultural, Peace Corps Volunteers bring back to the United States a personal knowledge of other peoples, other cultures, and other realities when they return. These goals are still as valid today, as they were in 1962, perhaps even more so, given the impact of globalization and the lingering damages of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives and the way in which volunteers achieve the Peace Corps Mission. This, however, should be a time of reflection to our Volunteers, to stay dedicated and embark on the task ahead. This era of service calls for selflessness and dedication, now more than ever. Volunteers often pursue very different paths to promote our mission of world peace and friendship. Whether they serve as two-year Volunteers, Returning, Response, or through Virtual Service, Peace Corps Volunteers are a source of inspiration and pride, and continue to make enormous differences in the lives of other people globally. In virtually every instance, they are making their contributions at the grass-roots levels, where the needs are often the greatest, where access to help is virtually always the most inadequate, and yet where the potential for progress is often the most promising.

I am amazed and encouraged when I think of the lasting project impacts here in Jamaica, including youth development, small business support, sustainable farming, and improving educational outcomes among rural primary schools. These are just some of the tangible contributions that Peace Corps Volunteers are making in Jamaica. In addition, an equally important part of the Peace Corps experience is intangible: it is the spirit of selfless service that our Volunteers have embodied throughout these last 60 years.

We are grateful for the open arms of the Government of Jamaica and its agencies, project partners, community stakeholders, and the deep rural host families that have received our Peace Corps Volunteers over the years. I also thank each one of you, including our dedicated staff, for exercising your 'duty of care' in following guidelines, in ensuring the safety and well-being of every one of our volunteers, especially through this and other challenging times.

A whole new world awaits us as we prepare to go into our 61st year of partnership. In whatever form we celebrate the enviable fact that volunteerism, even with its limitations, has remained stable for 60 years! We, the people, have successfully voiced and participated in lasting efforts, and will continue to do so to ensure that world peace and friendship lives on in countries like Jamaica.

As you enter this new paradigm of service, Peace Corps Jamaica must be ready to seize the moment and display the resilience for which it is known globally! Continue to be strong, recharge, reflect, and remember what volunteerism means to you! Despite the challenges, the strength and creativity of Peace Corps Jamaica will shine through as you continue to boldly chart your path forward.

Happy 60th Celebration Peace Corps Jamaica!

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

SENATOR THE HONORABLE KAMINA JOHNSON SMITH
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE
OF JAMAICA



Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

This is truly a year of milestones, in which we celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Jamaica's Independence, as well as the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Jamaica and the United States of America. Jamaica and the United States enjoy a deep and abiding friendship, underscored by our shared values and close, focused collaboration. I am therefore delighted to bring greetings on the 60th anniversary of the US Peace Corps in Jamaica. The commemoration of this significant achievement with such a longstanding partner as the Peace Corps, is reflective of the strength of our friendship. Indeed, the Corps has been with us from the very outset. We are proud that since their first arrival in June 1962.

Volunteers have looked to Jamaica as their home away from home. The Volunteers have used the opportunity to give practical, tangible meaning to the longstanding ethos of the Peace Corps, of promoting world peace and friendship. We are delighted that over four thousand Americans have since given invaluable service to our beloved Jamaica. Through their efforts, we have been able to receive vital assistance in Education, Health, Youth in Development, Agriculture, Community Economic Development and Environment.

For our part, we have benefitted tremendously from the exposure gained in several critical sectors, including in the areas of education, youth development, agriculture, environment, health and small business development. We also appreciate the various projects and programmes initiated by the Peace Corps, namely those for the creation of school gardens, the refurbishing of community centres, the promotion of adult literacy, the development of sports programmes, the empowerment of boy and girls, as well as for technology development. You – the Volunteers – can take pride in knowing that your life-changing ventures have tremendously impacted the lives of this and future generations of Jamaicans.

The Government of Jamaica is particularly pleased with the Peace Corps' strong emphasis on community development and especially on rural community development. We believe that this approach encourages a greater focus on the diversity of our people and communities and augurs well for our advancement. At the heart of the Peace Corps Programme is people-to-people engagement. Jamaica welcomes the effort to promote global peace and friendship by promoting a better understanding between peoples.

Undoubtedly, the opportunity for Volunteers to live with Jamaican families has enhanced the scope for greater cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Through these exchanges, our peoples have been able to learn more about each other and to build lasting and enduring friendships that have withstood the test of time. Such is the power and the value of the Corps. We are pleased to hear that the Volunteers, who sadly had to leave with the onset of the pandemic, will be returning to the island soon.

We look forward to welcoming and working with them as we maintain the tradition of excellent collaboration with the Corps. We continue to salute the vision of former President John F. Kennedy that inspired the creation of the US Peace Corps and take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation for all that they have done here in Jamaica. May you continue to be inspired and motivated as you strive to promote equity and inclusion across the globe.

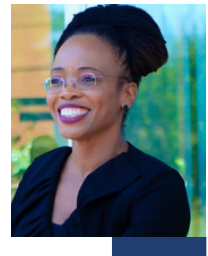
I wish to applaud Ms. Glenda Green, Country Director for Peace Corps Jamaica, and all those who preceded her, for the leadership provided over the years to unearth the potential that exists in our people. We remain deeply appreciative of the ready willingness of yourself and your team to serve in our beautiful island home. We are confident that we will continue to receive the relentless support of the Peace Corps, in spite of local and global challenges.

We would also like to hail all the Volunteers, past and present, who have given and continue to give of their time and talent. We also wish to commend Jamaican families and individuals who host the Volunteers and play the role of our community and cultural ambassadors. In closing, and on behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, I commend the Peace Corps for its years of dedicated and unswerving commitment to the partnership that it has enjoyed with Jamaica. We are thrilled with the shared journey that we have undertaken over the past sixty years and eagerly anticipate the road that lies ahead.

Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

GLEND A N. GREEN
COUNTRY DIRECTOR



Dear Governor General, Members of Parliament, Peace Corps Jamaica Staff, Volunteers, Host Families, Partners.

Warm greetings to each and every one of you as we celebrate a momentous occasion in our journey - the 60th anniversary of Peace Corps in Jamaica and the Government of Jamaica! This remarkable milestone is a testament to the enduring partnership and deep friendships that have blossomed over six decades of shared dreams and aspirations.

Our journey began in February of 1962, when our governments signed the country agreement. Since then, our partnership has flourished, developing into a testament of shared values, commitment, and genuine friendship. As we reflect upon this journey, we are reminded of the countless stories that have shaped our bond. From the dedicated Volunteers who have worked alongside partners in communities across Jamaica, to the incredible host families who have opened their homes and hearts, our partnership is one that has thrived on the bedrock of understanding, respect, and mutual growth. Over these sixty years, together, we have weathered storms, overcome pandemics, and celebrated victories. We have woven a tapestry of collaboration that spans education, healthcare, agriculture, and countless other fields. Each project, each interaction, has left an indelible mark on the landscape of Jamaica and the hearts of the Americans that have served across this beautiful island.

In March 2020, Peace Corps evacuated all 7000 of our worldwide Volunteers back to the US. The last Peace Corps Jamaica Volunteer departed on March 19, 2020. Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, creating new opportunities and challenges. The traditional tools we use for development and people-to-people connections were not available to us in the same way as they were two years ago. We have had to become innovative and agile by leveraging new approaches to continue the incredibly important work of Peace Corps Jamaica while at the same time maintaining the health, safety and well-being of Volunteers, Staff, and the Jamaican communities we work alongside. In response to the pandemic, Peace Corps Jamaica engaged in the new Virtual Service Pilot (VSP) implemented this year. The VSP program is an opportunity for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) and Returned Peace Corps Response Volunteers (RPCRVs) to engage virtually in support of the mission of Peace Corps. In addition, Peace Corps Jamaica staff and local partners have initiated and collaborated on various activities that support locally prioritized projects in the absence of Volunteers.

The enduring spirit of our partnership is not only reflected in the tangible results we have achieved, but also in the lasting bonds of friendship that have been forged. Volunteers have become members of Jamaican families, and Jamaican communities have embraced Peace Corps as their own. This connection goes beyond the exchange of knowledge and skills; it is a profound understanding of each other's cultures and an embodiment of the Jamaican spirit of warmth and resilience. We are not just colleagues, Volunteers, or partners; we are a family, a family that transcends borders and backgrounds. Together, we have built bridges of understanding and compassion that have made a profound difference. As we stand at the threshold of a new decade of collaboration, I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.

To the Government of Jamaica, your unwavering support has been instrumental in the success of our mission here. Together, we have shown the world what can be achieved through diplomacy, friendship, and a shared commitment to grassroots development and progress. Our partnership is a shining example of what can be accomplished when nations come together in the spirit of mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

To the committed, Peace Corps Jamaica Staff, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering commitment, your tireless efforts, and your boundless spirit. It is your passion and dedication that have made these sixty years so remarkable, and it is your continued support that will light the path for the generations to come. To our Partners, your steadfast support has been vital to the success of our Volunteers. Let us continue to work tirelessly to empower communities and foster lasting connections. Together, we can write the next chapter in our story of partnership and friendship, ensuring that the legacy of these sixty years will for generations to come. As we celebrate this milestone, let us reaffirm our commitment to building an even brighter future for Jamaica.

To the Host Families, thank you for your incredible hospitality and support of our Volunteers. Living with you not only allows them to be immersed into the Jamaican culture but it gives them a sense of belonging and security. Your kindness, patience, and willingness to share your way of life with them is invaluable. From the delicious meals you taught them to prepare, to the countless conversations you shared, all are an essential part of their journey. To the dedicated Peace Corps Volunteers who have served and continue to serve in Jamaica, your passion, resilience, and commitment have brought hope and opportunity to countless individuals. Your work has enriched not only the lives of Jamaicans but also your own, as you carry the invaluable lessons and memories of this experience with you for a lifetime.

Happy 60th anniversary, Peace Corps Jamaica, and to the Government of Jamaica! May our partnership and friendship continue to shine brightly for many more years to come. Here's to the next sixty years of partnership and friendship, as we continue to work hand in hand, creating a brighter future for Jamaica and the world.

With heartfelt thanks and warmest regards.



Peace Corps' global mission of promoting world peace and friendship through community-based development and inter-cultural understanding is the mainstay of Peace Corps Jamaica. Providing communities and organizations with trained men and women; identifying effective and sustainable solutions; forging mutually beneficial partnerships; and supporting Volunteers and staff in a safe, peaceful and culturally sensitive environment.

Peace Corps Jamaica's commitment to service in Jamaica began back on February 22, 1962, when Premier Norman Washington Manley signed an agreement with the United States government inviting the Peace Corps to have a program in Jamaica. On June 12 of that year, a few weeks before Jamaica's independence, the first group of Volunteers arrived in Jamaica.

That group of 37 Volunteers, 26 men and 11 women, worked in many fields, including agriculture, vocational education, library development, construction, electricity, and plumbing. By 1963, there were about 100 Volunteers serving in Jamaica. Their work mostly focused on grassroots development projects. Volunteers lived then as they do today - with Jamaican host families, adapting to the Jamaican culture and inter-cultural differences while learning the local language and foods.

Since inception, more than 4,000 people have served as Volunteers in this beautiful island nation. Volunteers are trained on safety and security, the culture and language (Patwa) compliance with the local laws and technical skills that enable them to perform their assigned tasks. Current Volunteer assignments are within two sectors: agriculture and education. Most Volunteers are placed in small, rural communities. Two - year Volunteer assignments are for a period of 24 months, Virtual Service engagements are for 3 - 6 months, while Response Volunteers serve in larger cities for up to 12 months depending on the project.



Volunteers Who Have Served

4,025

ABOUT PEACE CORPS
JAMAICA



PARTNERSHIP



PEACE CORPS

1962-

1960s

13 Groups

AREAS OF SERVICE: Agriculture, Rural Development, Home Economics, Vocational Education, Health, Trades Training, Mathematics and Library Development



Country Directors:

Lester Spielman
Micheal Edwards
Charles Wood
John Schaffer
William Taylor

1970s

20 Groups

AREAS OF SERVICE: Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Home Economics, Dance, Mathematics, Agriculture, Industrial Arts and Medical Services.



Country Directors:

Andy Horkee
James Matheson
Lorette Carter-Miller
Don Galloway

1980s

20 Groups

AREAS OF SERVICE: Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Home Economics, Dance, Mathematics, Agriculture, Industrial Arts and Medical Services.



Country Directors:

John Gist
Max Binswanger
Arlen Erdahl
John Wright
Robert Reid
Edmund Hughes

1990s

13 Groups

AREAS OF SERVICE: Environment, Community Health, Youth at Risk



Country Directors:

Janet Simoni
Tim Persons

JAMAICA

- 2022

2020s

1 Group

AREAS OF SERVICE:
Agriculture and Education

Country Director:
Glenda Green



2000s

11 Groups

AREAS OF SERVICE: Youth-At-Risk Development, Environment Awareness and Environment, Health/Water Sanitation, Information Technology and Community Development.

Country Directors:
Suchet Loois
Howard Anderson
Bruce Cohen
Leila Webster



2010s

7 Groups

AREAS OF SERVICE:
Environment, Education and Youth

Country Directors:
Carla Ellis
Jennifer White
Paul Sully



60TH ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

For its 60th Anniversary, Peace Corps Jamaica reached out to its partners, staff, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) asking them to share their memories, greetings and well-wishes on this milestone occasion. We are so grateful to those who submitted their greetings. On the following pages, we share some of the messages that we received.



I never realized when I join what an impact my service would have on my life. I am forever grateful for the passion of service and the understanding of resilience that service instilled in me.

-From Amanda Thompson



I am ecstatic about the tremendous opportunities I had while working with the Peace Corps for the times that I have been there. The Peace Corps taught me how to be tactful, non-judgemental and humble. Working at the Peace Corps has left an indelible mark on my life.

-From Kayann Hibbert



Happy 60th Service Anniversary Peace Corps! To my service country of Jamaica, the Peace Corps team, my host families, and my school -- BIG UP yourselves, the memories, the bonds, and the lessons learned and shared will always be in my heart!

-From Grace Major



Big Ups PCJ. Yuh nah easy! We treasure our Peace Corps memories made with the amazing PC staff, volunteers and community members.

-From Michelle & Jedd Chang



Happy 60th Anniversary, Peace Corps Jamaica! As I reflect on my service I realize the incredible impact the entire organization had on the country of Jamaica.

I'll never forget when I first arrived at my school I sat down with the Principal and he said "Sir we are on the Ministry of Educations list to be closed down and don't have much time to increase our enrollment. "During my time at St. Albans Primary & Infant we increased the enrollment from 15 to over 85 and counting. A couple weeks after my service was completed not only did our school that has been open for over 100 years get removed from the closure list, but the government of

Jamaica started investing in the school. I share this because this is only my Peace Corps Jamaica Story. This incredible organization has had numerous volunteers over the last 60 years and has made impacts from coast to coast! To the former volunteers and REMARKABLE staff, Happy 60th Anniversary!

-From Kevin McClellan



It has been a distinct pleasure being a trainer/facilitator for Peace Corps Jamaica over the years. Congrats on 60 years.... big up unoo self an nuff respeck! Onwards.....

-From Fabian Thomas



I want to thank all the Peace Corps Jamaica's staff for the wonderful work they've been doing for all the groups that were in Jamaica.

-From Abu Bodi



To all the Incredible people at Jamaica, all corners of the amazing Caribbean jewel, and to all who served over the past 60 years - you have collectively changed the world! and ofcourse, unquestionably for the better!

Whether indelible music, multicultural integration, jerk chicken and/or your loving spirit- the impact on my life at least everlasting. I even met my beautiful wife at 35+ years while volunteering there!

-From Jim Falls



Peace Corps Jamaica is one of the most magical offices I have ever had the pleasure to work. It was an honour to work with Staff, Counterparts, and Volunteers. Happy 60th Peace Corps Jamaica. You are aging like a fine rum !

-From Michelle Slavin



Congratulations to Peace Corps Jamaica Volunteers and staff on the 60th Anniversary Celebration.

As Country Director from 2006 -2008 I thoroughly enjoyed working with the dedicated staff (see photo) and the effective and engaged Volunteers. Notable events during that period included: consolidation of all Volunteers at the US Embassy in 2007 to wait out Hurricane Dean; joining staff to cheer for Usain Bolt as he sprinted to three gold metals at the 2008 Summer Olympics; and joining Volunteers to celebrate the election of the first African American President of the United States. John Kennedy would be proud of the record of the Peace Corps after 60 years in Jamaica.

The thousands of Volunteers and Jamaican counterparts, and the hundreds of staff who have contributed to that record, should be honored at this time and all should feel pride in the positive human legacy they have engendered.

-Howard Anderson



PROGRAM REPORTS

AGRICULTURE SECTOR



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOODS INITIATIVE (SALI)



MESSAGE FROM THE RURAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



RADA
RURAL AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Peace Corps Jamaica was the seventh Peace Corps programme to be established world-wide and started the same year Jamaica became an independent nation on February 22, 1962. They have partnered with communities across Jamaica in the areas of education, agriculture, environment, health, urban development and small business development. In Jamaica, they are presently engaged in two (2) sectors: Agriculture and Education.

Peace Corps' mission to promote world peace and friendship remains more relevant for our two nations than ever before. This collaborative partnership continues to produce mutually beneficial results as they advance world peace, friendship and support Jamaica's National Development Goals. Through its Vision 2030 National Development Plan, the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) and civil society have identified climate smart agriculture and an increased focus on agribusiness and livelihood diversification as two top priorities. Extension officers from the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) are able to work regionally with communities to build the organizational capacity and technical skills of community organizations focused on agriculture, creating an opportunity for partnership between them and Peace Corps Volunteers.

Over the years, Peace Corps Jamaica's support to the Agriculture sector has been significant. There have been substantial opportunities which helped farmers' groups and community organizations improve agricultural production, organizational capacity and income generation. Most importantly, rural Jamaican community groups have benefited significantly from the Peace Corps Jamaica Logical Project Framework, whose goal is focused on individuals and/or groups in rural Jamaican communities that contribute to sustainable livelihoods and resilience to environmental shocks and stresses.

In celebration of Peace Corps Jamaica's 60th Anniversary and remarkably done, the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) extends hearty congratulations to Peace Corps Jamaica (PCJ) on its 60th Anniversary. Over the years, the collaboration with your organization has been superb and amazing. Peace Corps Jamaica has made a valuable impact on the farmers of Jamaica in a positive way, by providing support to individual farmers, farmers' groups and schools across the island. Exposure of Peace Corps officers to the Jamaican culture and traditions at the community level would provide an excellent opportunity for learning from each other, sharing and developing friendships and new collaborations. In addition, it has been our distinct pleasure to continuously engage in training sessions and virtual courses, which have been orchestrated specifically for RADA's Extension Staff, by your hardworking team.

We are grateful for the continuous collaboration with your organization, and we look forward to greater and continued partnership opportunities with Peace Corps Jamaica.

As we say in Jamaica: "Walk Good PCJ Team!"

Together WE CAN even better



AGRICULTURE SECTOR

The SALI project will contribute directly to the achievement of National Vision 2030 National Goal 3 – National Outcome 12 that seeks to build the Agriculture industry as an internationally competitive structure. Specifically, the three objectives of the SALI project include: Increase the capacity of farmers to improve the diversity, productivity, and/or sustainability of their agricultural production (climate smart agriculture). Increase the capacity of farmers to generate agriculture related income. Strengthen the capacity of agriculture focused organizations to achieve their mission. As Peace Corps Volunteers work within the rural communities with their Partners to achieve these objectives for the SALI framework, they will be contributing directly to some of the priority sector related strategies detailed in the Medium-Term Socio-Economic Framework for Jamaica for 2018-2021.

PARTNERS:



- Department of Cooperatives and Friendly Societies (DCFS)
- Global Environment Facility Small Grants Program (GEF/SGP)



Parishes where volunteers have served

14



PCV's who have served

2,300



Adults with improved knowledge of environmental practices

2,911





AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Peace Corps Jamaica's Environment: Green initiative Project was initiated in 1990, evaluated in 1997 and 2002, and was extended to 2007. During this period, the project evolved from focusing solely on environmental education in the formal education system to involve education and awareness for community members in conjunction with environmental, non-government, and community-based organizations.

In 2006, based on information gathered about national priorities and Volunteers' experience on the ground, it became evident that Volunteers' work in natural resource management should not only focus on solely increasing awareness, but also enabling the adoption of sound practices. It is with this rationale, that the Green Initiative Framework was expanded to meet the purpose of improving the quality of life of Jamaicans by implementing sustainable environmental practice

Under this framework goal, Volunteers worked to improve environmental knowledge and practices in schools, adult community members and to strengthen environmental and agricultural organizations. Given the geographical scope of Volunteers within rural to deep rural areas of Jamaica, the interdependence of agriculture and the environment was reinforced. Volunteers primarily worked in improving environmental resource management, land-husbandry practices, school garden creation, solid waste management programs and organizational capacity development for small rural organizations.

In response to the Peace Corps 'Focus In and Train Up' initiative, a global sector review process of the Environment sector project was initiated in 2018. This review process included a substantive review of research literature, previous project data, interviews with collaborating partners, community stakeholders and Peace Corps Headquarter Specialists. In response to the results of the analyses and consultations, the decision was made to phase out the Environment Sector project and implement a new Agriculture Sector Project – Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihoods Initiative (SALI).



PROGRAM REPORTS

EDUCATION SECTOR



PRIMARY LITERACY



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & YOUTH

DR. ANDRE HILL
NATIONAL LITERACY COORDINATOR



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & YOUTH

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Mahatma Gandhi

Peace Corps Jamaica has been a valuable partner to the Government of Jamaica for 60 years. The support provided has always been in keeping with the global mission of the Peace Corps, that of promoting world peace and friendship. Jamaicans who have benefitted from the relationship would have been given support within their communities through activities geared at the development of individuals, families, the community and by extension, Jamaica. The cultural diversity of the volunteers would have also had a positive impact, as Jamaicans are provided with the opportunity to learn the way of life of the volunteers.

The relationship between Jamaica and the Peace Corps, which commenced a few weeks before Jamaica's independence, has continued throughout the lifetime of independent Jamaica and has been the foundation for many projects that have positively influenced nation building. The basis of the volunteerism remains the same, with volunteers being hosted by families within the communities they serve. The benefits are not one sided however, as the volunteers would also have benefitted from the service they provide. The rich cultural heritage of Jamaica would have led to unique experiences, such as learning the Jamaican Creole, enjoying the local cuisine and scenery. With almost four thousand volunteers to date having served in Jamaica, this relationship is indeed one that is to be celebrated.

Peace Corps Jamaica's support to the Jamaican education system has been significant. Teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders of the Ministry of Education, particularly the schools within which Peace Corps volunteers have been giving service, have all been positively impacted by the presence of the volunteers. In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the noteworthy work done by Peace Corps Jamaica, it is important to highlight the contribution to literacy development. In recognition of the vision of the Ministry of Education and Youth, for all primary level students to be literate, this partnership has allowed for over one thousand volunteers to participate in literacy intervention activities.

Through Peace Corps Jamaica's Primary Literacy Advisor Programme, which is guided by principles aimed at serving students at the primary level who display challenges in reading, as well as support to the teachers and parents of the targeted students, a substantial contribution to nation building has been realized. In furtherance of this, the partnership between the National Literacy Team in order to have volunteers fully aware of the National Comprehensive Literacy Programme over the years has led to the enhancement of literacy instruction, and the literacy levels of those students who have had the privilege of being a part of this programme. In parishes across Jamaica, with specific focus in schools across Regions 2, 3 and 5, the mutually beneficial working relationship between the National Literacy

Team and the volunteers of Peace Corps Jamaica has resulted in collaborative training opportunities, combined lesson execution and an exposure to the Literacy 1-2-3 framework which is an integral part of the National Comprehensive Literacy Programme.

"Sacrifice, commitment, passion and love for the people". These are but a few of the guiding principles on which the service of the volunteers from Peace Corps Jamaica has been predicated. The COVID 19 pandemic, which impacted day to day activities in all sectors of societies across the world did not diminish the commitment to partnering with the stakeholders of the Jamaican education system. Access to training, classroom support and sustained partnership continue to be offered virtually and otherwise. This dedication is the hallmark of true volunteerism.

In recognition of the exemplary service to the Jamaican education system, it is an honor to congratulate Peace Corps Jamaica on this your 60th anniversary. The value of the contributions made have not diminished as the years progressed. As we look forward to many more years of a sustained relationship, it is anticipated that the Jamaican society in general, and literacy enhancement in particular, will continue to be positively impacted.





EDUCATION SECTOR

Peace Corps Jamaica's (PCJ), Primary Literacy Project focuses on improving literacy within small, rural primary schools. This Project, which is aligned to the Government of Jamaica's National Developmental Goals for 2030, seeks to integrate life skills, gender-equity, lifelong learning, youth development, environmental protection and agriculture through several co-curricular activities. The Primary Literacy Project evolved from Peace Corps Jamaica's Youth as Promise (YAP) Project, which previously focused on Literacy and Numeracy, and Life Skills. Today, in response to the needs of the Ministry of Education, the project provides literacy instructions to students; seeks to improve teacher capacity; and assists families and caregivers to develop interest and skills to support their children to increase their academic achievements.

Peace Corps Jamaica is conscious that to achieve success the work of the Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) must involve the awareness and cooperation of school leadership, community leaders, students, teachers and parents. To this end, great effort is placed in ensuring that each site selected has genuine need, the support of relevant stakeholders and that host country nationals are willing to work alongside the Volunteer in their communities. Volunteers, with the support of counterparts, provide primary literacy instruction and support through direct literacy instruction to students who are performing below the grade level; collaborate with primary school teachers in their professional development to ensure promotion of literature; and support the increased access to literacy resources through school libraries and clubs. Volunteers also work with parents to develop the ability to assist their children to increase their academic achievement. The work of the Volunteers has been instrumental in positively impacting under resourced schools to improve the literacy skills at the institution.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic on March 10, 2020, and the subsequent evacuation of PCVs from Jamaica has significantly affected our work with our partner schools and learning communities. However, Peace Corps Jamaica continues to support the work of our partners in the absence of Volunteers. The agency has provided teacher capacity building workshops and literacy support through virtual read aloud given that many of the students show serious levels of regression in their learning. We are grateful to our partners for their tremendous support as we continue to advance the mission of the Peace Corps, which is promoting world peace and friendship.



EDUCATION SECTOR



Number of hours spent annually to
basic reading classes

130,746



Number of PCV's engaged in
extracurricular activities

2,160



Number of teacher partners

364



Number of Students engaged

3,113

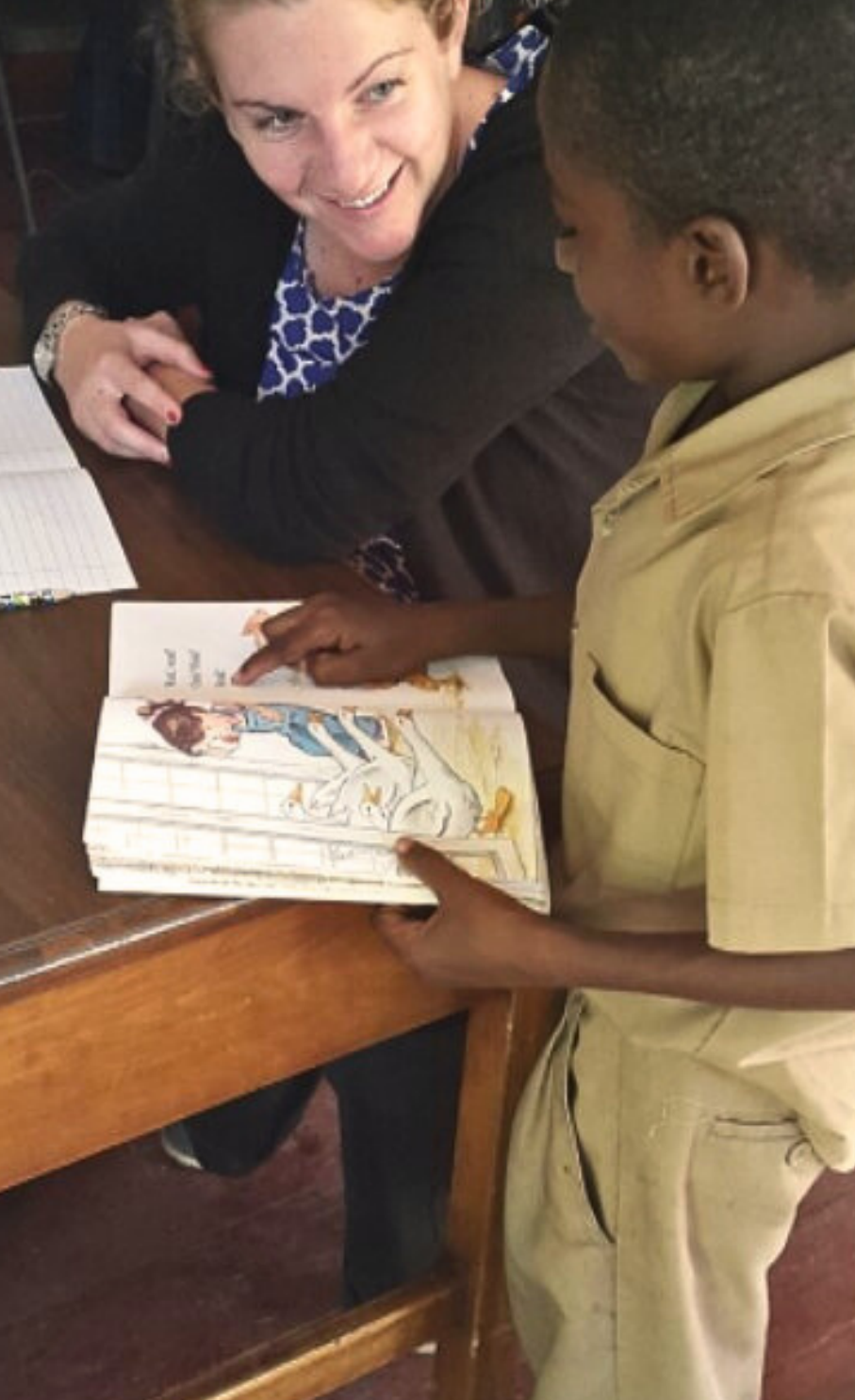


Number of students who gained access to
reading resources

3,975

Partners:





PROGRAM REPORTS

VIRTUAL SERVICE PILOT





VIRTUAL SERVICE PILOT



Started In

2021



Number Serving

4



Number Served To Date

6

The Virtual Service Model also known as the Virtual Service Pilot (VSP) program is an opportunity for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) and Returned Peace Corps Response Volunteers (RPCRVs) to engage virtually in support of the mission of Peace Corps. These Virtual Service Pilot Participants (VSPPs) are private citizens who donate time and voluntary services based on the request of our host country partners. VSPPs provide online support requested by a host country while maintaining their job and family commitments and serve 5-15 hours a week.

VSPPs work in both sectors to build capacity, create sustainable systems and engage in collaborative partnerships. The VSP program has allowed us to extend our services to stakeholders who would be otherwise excluded from our regular Two-Year Volunteer and Response Programs due to safety restrictions and other constraints.

The first phase of the Virtual Service Pilot (VSP) commenced in November 2021. Post worked with our partners in the Agriculture and Education sectors to develop Statements of Virtual Engagement (SoVEs) that were aligned to sector project priorities. In March 2022, five Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) commenced their engagement with five partners. The Virtual Service Pilot Participants (VSPPs) will be working in Engagements include, conducting literacy pull-out sessions, facilitating training sessions with various partners to build capacity and creating learning resources. These Phase one engagements will last for 3-6 months.

The second phase of the VSP program commenced in June and new engagements continued in October 2022.

Our present partners include educational, civic, NGOs and agricultural organizations:

| Park Hall Primary | Ritchies Primary

| Bethabara Primary | Roses Valley Primary

| Ministry of Education (Literacy Unit) | Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA)

| Villa Road Primary

| Rotary Club of May Pen | Jamaica Association of the Deaf (JAD)

PROGRAM REPORTS

PEACE CORPS RESPONSE





PC RESPONSE



Projected to Serve

14



Project Resumption

2023



Number Served To Date

30

Peace Corps Response (PCR) has sent experienced professionals to undertake short-term, high-impact service assignments in communities for over twenty years. Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs) are expected to possess the technical skills needed to fulfill their assigned role with minimal training. Required qualifications typically include at least a 4-year undergraduate degree and 2-5 years of professional experience.

Our PCR program places PCRVs on short term assignments, usually 3 to 12 months, to work to meet the goals and objectives of the sectors. Historically, we have had volunteers serve in the Education, Health, Community Economic Development, Youth and Environment sectors. The impact of the work of PCRVs has been great. The PCR program has contributed in cementing our relationships and engendering greater support from our partners at the national level.

Peace Corps Jamaica had the last PCRV in 2017. The resumption of the Response Program was delayed due to the global pandemic, but is expected to resume in 2023. Currently, the Response positions are aligned to the frameworks of the two sectors, Agriculture and Education. Response position descriptions include relevant skills that complement the work of the 2-year Volunteers and their counterparts.

PROGRAM REPORTS

STAFF-LED ACTIVITIES & COVID RESPONSE



STAFF-LED ACTIVITIES & COVID RESPONSE

On March 15, 2020, posts around the world received notification from the then Director of Peace Corps that all 7,000 of our worldwide Volunteers had to be evacuated back to the U.S. by the end of that week. Since then, without Volunteers at post, Peace Corps Jamaica (PCJ) staff members engaged our partners in locally-prioritized projects to help meet Peace Corps' mission and goals.

Framework Definitions

Goal 1
Activities that strengthen local capacity and relate to the Logical Project Framework (LPF) objectives for the Agriculture and Education Sectors.

Goal 2
Activities that relate to sharing American culture with host country nationals (HCNs).

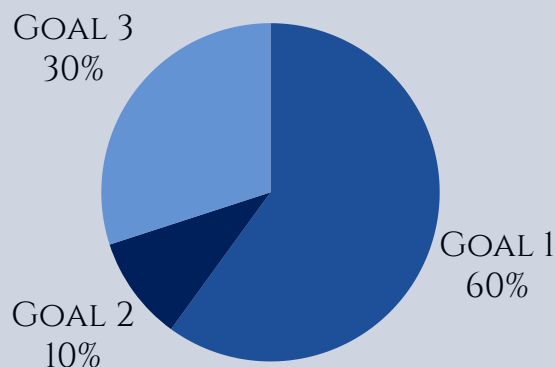
COVID/Other
Activities that relate to the COVID-19 response, including vaccinations and public education, as well as initiatives that meet community identified needs and priorities brought on by the pandemic.



4,023

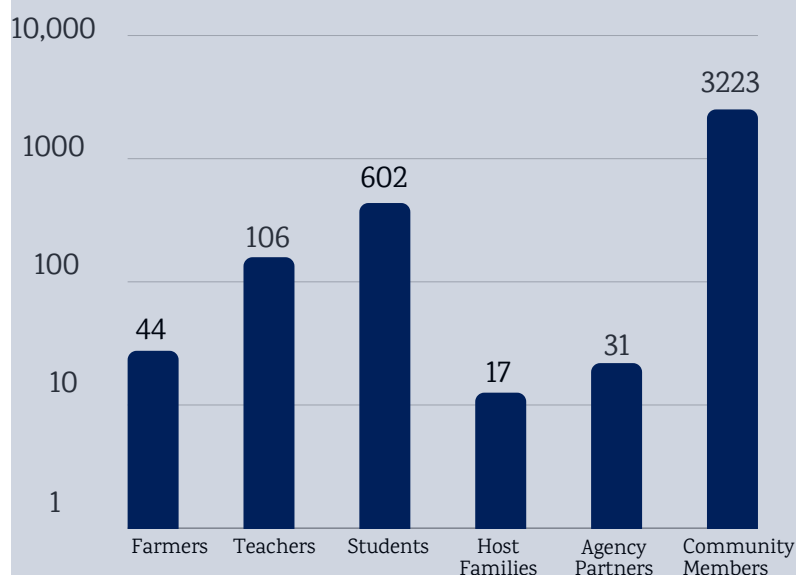
Number of Beneficiaries

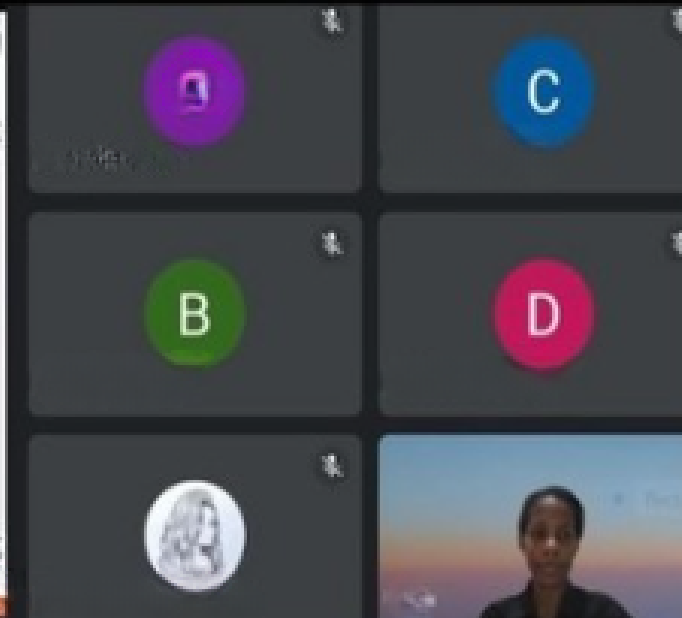
STAFF-LED PROGRAMMING BY FRAMEWORK



*Post engaged in 10 Staff-led Activities

BENEFICIARIES OF STAFF-LED PROJECTS







REFLECTIONS

MY PEACE CORPS STORY...





COHORT 1

PCV Robert O'Brien
Cohort 1 1962-64

Reflection transcribed from video interview and reflection submitted to PCJ Country Director Paul Sully.

In 1962, Robert interrupted studies at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer in Jamaica as part of Cohort 1. He taught construction skills to teenage boys at the Cobbla Camp near Spaldings. Following the Peace Corps service, he completed studies at Georgetown. He shares his memory below.

I am Robert O'Brien, born in New York in 1939. Kennedy was running for President in 1960, I was actually a student at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. The idea of the Peace Corps came up during the political campaign. Kennedy was certainly into introducing new ideas, it is fair to say. Kennedy was an inspiration. The famous phrase from Kennedy's inauguration speech was, "not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." And I think the Peace Corps was his idea to give us in my age demographic an opportunity to do something.

In April 1962, I reported for training in JFK's brand-new Peace Corps. We were destined for Jamaica, then a British colony about to become an independent country. Jamaica was not my first choice. I wanted to learn a new language and be exposed to a 'foreign' culture. From what little I knew, Jamaica lacked both.

Jamaica has become a huge part of who I am. At age 80, I can state with certainty that I have never learned as much in as short a time as I did in those few weeks. We had several outstanding trainers, but far and away the most engaging and the most educational was Miss Lou. By the time we finished training, I had only begun to comprehend Patois, but I had learned that there is indeed a Jamaican culture, woven from many threads but unique and wonderful.



COHORT 89

PCV Jennifer Odom-Douglas
Cohort 89 2018-2010

Reflection transcribed from video interview

*Cohort 89 was the last 2-year PCV group in the field prior to the global Covid-19 evacuation of Volunteers

My name is Jennifer Odom-Douglas and I represent the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a Chemical Risk Manager in Washington, DC. I served in Peace Corps Jamaica from 2018-2020 in the Environmental Sector in the beautiful parish of St. Thomas.

Just working alongside my community members with whatever projects that they had going on whether it was passing cement buckets up to deck a roof within the community or more specifically writing grants and securing a grant to retrofit a 40ft container into a honey processing facility where they can sell their honey locally and eventually go to selling it internationally. I learned new skills like beekeeping, and I was terrified of working with bees prior to going to work in St. Thomas and prior to working with the Peace Corps.

I never thought I would ever work with bees and here I am now, still working with them. It is pretty exciting, and I love the new skills that I learnt while serving in Jamaica, I am still using today.



COHORT 92

PCV Denise Hampson
Cohort 92 2022

Reflection transcribed from video greetings.

Greetings! It has been a long, long journey to Jamaica. From the moment you stepped off the airplane you are met with the heat, masks and how to just navigate luggage and customs. We had bonus time in Kingston at the Medallion Hall Hotel, where we were introduced to good cultural food, 'whol eep a it' (a lot of it).

Our group of Peace Corps Trainees (PCTs) bonded while learning to play dominoes with Bobo, one of our Language and Cross-Culture Facilitators (LCFs), and other Jamaican games. The unexpected extra time in Kingston allowed us to become a cohesive group and we worked and played well together. That brings us now to our journey to Pre-Service Training (PST) in St. Mary where we experienced the beauty of Jamaica. The beautiful vistas, the long winding roads and the beautiful fruit trees all took our breath away.

The people of Jamaica have welcomed us and there is a special Jamaican spirit. It is wonderful to have this opportunity to live in the community with our host families, 'me mada' (my host mother), 'faada' (father), 'sista' (sister), and 'bredda dem' (brothers). Also, big up the Peace Corps Staff 'massiv' (everyone at the Peace Corps).

We are just so happy and excited to be working in Jamaica to fulfill the goals of the Peace Corps in promoting world peace and friendship.

HOST FAMILY

Mrs. Norma Hill
2018-Present



In 2018, when my husband and I were introduced to the Peace Corps Program, we jumped on board without hesitation. About 20 years ago, I had worked with the Peace Corps as a supervisor to Volunteers who were placed at the Child Development Agency (CDA). At that time, they were either working with children in the children's homes, or in the office as Social Workers. The thought of having a volunteer living in my home would add another dimension to my interaction with Volunteers. This was a very interesting prospect.

We loved it! We had three wonderful boys... Joel, Noah and Josh – all very different but lovely young men! I learned a lot about their homes in the United States and was exposed to their different cultures. We came together and learned from each other as they adjusted to living with my family and learning the Jamaican way of doing things. A life-long family-ship was born – I speak with my boys from time to time and have had a few visits since they left and went back to the USA. I know that we will continue to be in each other lives.

I am so happy that I am a part of the Peace Corps Jamaica home-stay program and have had such memorable experiences.



STAFF

Trevor “Froggy” Chance
Peace Corps Jamaica 1982-Present



When I started at Peace Corps Jamaica (PCJ) 40 years ago, I had moved to Kingston from the 'country' to work with my aunt driving. At that time, I had never heard about the Peace Corps, and it was a close family friend who told me about the Peace Corps and that they were seeking to hire a driver. I applied and went for the interview at the training offices that were in Norbrook, St. Andrew at the time and as they say, the rest is history.

For me, the Peace Corps is like no other company I had ever seen. It is more like a family than a company. I love the experience of spending time and interacting with people from different cultures. There was such an excitement in that exchange between the two cultures and you become more aware of certain things that we here take for granted.



*Froggy receiving the John F. Kennedy Service Award – Staff, 2016
from Laura Chambers, Chief of Staff, in Washington, D.C.*

For example, the Jamaican culture, food, fruits and mountain 'bush', the Volunteers' reactions to all of that was excitement. When the Volunteers arrived, they were like people you saw on television, they came well dressed.

In the early 80s, you would not find a group that came that did not have a guitar or a banjo and we would have a lot of fun just interacting and learning from each other. Also in the 80s, Volunteers were stationed in Kingston, places like West Kingston, Vineyard Town, Papine, and Mona but today Volunteers are no longer in those areas because of safety. There have been a lot of changes over the years.

I remember too that in the 80s and 90s, Jamaica was the training site for both Jamaican Volunteers and those for the Eastern Caribbean. We used to welcome large groups of 80 or more Volunteers annually. In those days, training was a separate unit from Peace Corps Jamaica and was conducted by external trainers like CPH International.

Over time, training shifted to community-based training done by local staff, and I have so many fond memories of the Peace Corps. I have met so many diverse persons and in fact, I have picked up every cohort of Volunteers from the airport for the last 40 years and that is always exciting. I can tell you that because of the Peace Corps, I got to know all over Jamaica because in those days, Volunteers were stationed in all parishes.

I also like the holidays, so having jerk turkey for thanksgiving, trying pumpkin pie, these were times when we would have that cultural interaction and learn more about each others countries. Even though so many things have changed and there are a lot more regulations from when I started, like housing and the Volunteers cannot ride bikes anymore, the spirit of the Peace Corps remains the same. I still enjoy coming to work.

STAFF

Aisha Harris-Parker

Language & Cross Culture Coordinator 2016-present



As a creole language, Jamaican (Patwa) was thought of by some, as a language not worth studying. It was viewed as an inferior language to Standard English and this caused a lot of disconnect between the speakers of the language and anyone who chose to advocate for it. So, when I chose to study it at university, people told me, *"Yu naa get a job with that!"* (You will never get a job with that!)

They were so wrong! In 2007, I saw the Peace Corps vacancy announcement for Language and Cross Culture facilitator. This was the job that I was looking for. This would be the opportunity to share our local language with the world with a training staff that believed in the connective power of language to advance the idea of world peace and friendship.

From the beginning the purpose was clear. As Nelson Mandela says, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands that goes to his head, If you talk to him in his language, it goes to his heart." Peace Corps helped to give Jamaican Patwa a platform and lessen cultural barriers as volunteers learnt the language and used it in their communities, drawing an awareness to its value and the possibilities that existed when people were able to connect at the heart level.

It was the most unexpected turn of events 7 years later when I had the opportunity to return. It was a legit homecoming! PCJ was now employing a FT Language and Cross Culture Coordinator! This job had helped to keep me connected to the passion in my very soul and situated me with like-minded people who had bought into this concept of world peace and friendship.



Aisha Harris-Parker participates in Peace Corps' "Global Connections: Stories from the Peace Corps" showcase with her story "TALAWA: We are small, but we are strong".

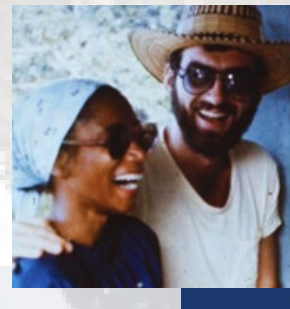
The Jamaican language is now gone abroad! The global reach was more than just the reggae music from Bob Marley. As I met staff members and volunteers from all over the world, interacting with colleagues as far as Ecuador, Guatemala, Belize, Eswatini, Tonga and getting opportunities to share our language and culture with them as well, there was a profound interconnectedness that the Peace Corps had facilitated among us. The Platform just kept on getting bigger and bigger. I learnt about languages I read about in books, from the speakers themselves - The relationships formed deepened our connections and went beyond the borders that seemingly separated us. We had all bought into this concept of world peace and friendship.

I finally realized what it all meant. World peace seems more and more like a possibility and not that 'lofty' concept I mentioned earlier. PC gets it.

When I think of the chain reaction that Peace Corps has started globally and that I am a part of, it is the human element, every single person that has learnt the value of friendship, of mutual understanding, of people, because people and their languages matter, no matter where in the world they live. Everyday, I facilitate connections, so that people feel less like outsiders, and all because we have all brought into this concept of world peace and friendship and we are spreading it, (as a Jamaican proverb says "wan wan koko full baaskit") one person and one connection at a time.

PEACE CORPS RESPONSE

Mickie Cuevas Posts: Jamaica (1976-78); Belize (2011-13);
Belize (Peace Corps Response 2017)



The common image of the Peace Corps Volunteer is that of a recent college graduate waiting to make a difference in the world before embarking on their life journey, building a career, and/or raising a family.

For those who choose to serve later in life, the Peace Corps can be fulfilling in unexpected ways. While the most obvious difference between a traditional Volunteer, and the “well-seasoned”, older Volunteer is acquired work and life experiences, all trainees arrive in a country full of enthusiasm and determination that may get sprinkled with a generous dose of reality and frustration. Maturity at any age, may provide the patience, and acceptance required to persevere.

As an older Volunteer, your experiences, skill, and hints of gray hair may automatically earn you respect as someone with both knowledge and wisdom. This respect for one’s elders is common in countries the Peace Corps serves. It makes your presence take on great significance, and responsibility.

I was fortunate to serve first as a Volunteer in my 20s, and then 40 years later, as a retiree, and I cherish both experiences. My understanding of the Peace Corps, its goals, my assignments, my appreciation for the host country and my counterparts, my focus, the friendships forged with fellow Volunteers and host country nationals, and patience were far greater the second time around.

In the 40 years between assignments, I gained the skills and experience to better address the Peace Corps’ First Goal, and the maturity to appreciate my strengths and limitations. I cherished every moment of service, and learned from those around me. It is never too late to grow and have new experiences through Peace Corps service.



PEACE CORPS VIRTUAL SERVICE

Adapted from Kelsey McMahon's article on

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/stories/online-agricultural-training-is-reaching-more-jamaicans-faster>



Rural Agricultural Development Authority's (RADA) Alisha Anderson was an obvious choice for Peace Corps. Jamaica when it came to identifying Virtual counterparts. Alisha collaborated with her fair share of Peace Corps Volunteers prior to participating in Virtual Service. Keisha Chung, Peace Corps Jamaica's Response Coordinator, first approached Alisha to discuss RADA's potential involvement in Virtual Service in September 2021.

"The success of the program hinges greatly on the involvement of the partner agency and counterpart. Alisha and her team embraced Kaitlan as another RADA team member from day one. They worked collaboratively to complete and execute the work plan, which had specific tasks, clear timelines and the roles of persons involved," Keisha said. "Alisha is a model counterpart, and I am excited to explore other partnership opportunities for Peace Corps' three service models."

If you have the pleasure of meeting Alisha in person, you might be surprised to discover that the positive and self-motivated counterpart is a double amputee. She had to make significant adjustments in life – like working remotely from home – but her commitment to agricultural development is unwavering. Alisha is passionate about applying what she learns to assist local farmers implement technology to strengthen Jamaica's food security and safety.

The farmers' needs have changed significantly because of the climate change; Farmers struggle to contend with a changing climate. For example, they struggle to keep their farms productive amid dwindling rainfall, a byproduct of climate change," Alisha said. While climate change challenges can be expected to change overtime, learning effective farm management skills will remain a constant need. Alisha thought that Peace Corps' Virtual Service offered an opportunity to address this need, specifically group dynamics.

During the four-month virtual engagement, Kaitlan Mahoney, a RPCV who served in Fiji from 2015 to 2016, virtually met Alisha and the RADA team for 90 minutes on Mondays and Thursdays. Together, they planned training that focused on group formation and strengthening conflict resolution. "Alisha, from the start, was an enthusiastic and supportive counterpart.

Her energy was a powerful motivator throughout the assignment," Kaitlan said. "I could not envision the success of this project without her dedication and determination." Alisha is eager for more Peace Corps, especially in-person Volunteers. "When you're online, you know, sometimes there's a delay in feedback." Despite that, Alisha recognizes the benefits of virtual collaboration and RADA was able to train more of their officers in less time because of the virtual training.

FRIENDSHIP



STORIES

From The Field



PEACE CORPS

STORIES

As a part of Peace Corps Jamaica's 60th Anniversary celebrations, a call was made to Volunteers who had served in Jamaica inviting them to share their memories from service. We are so thankful to those who submitted their memories. On the following pages, we share some of the messages that we received.

Michael S. Gill

Jamaica, Peace Corps and Me at 60!



Jamaica, Peace Corps and Me at 60!

Whenever the topic comes up – and it comes up a lot, since it is usually me talking about the fact that I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer from 1987-1989 in Jamaica, I always start with “they were the two best years of my life.”

My Peace Corps experience in Jamaica gave me so many critical life experiences that have served me well, but it is the experience of pure joy that was my greatest gift from Jamaica. Joy that has carried me all these years as I have just turned 60. I saw a notice that both Jamaica as an independent nation and Peace Corps Jamaica are also turning 60.

During training, we were living in Spanish Town and one of our early assignments was to be dropped off in downtown Kingston near Parade on our own. Our assignment was simple, find your own lunch and then meet back at a designated spot. I remember being dropped off and for the briefest of moments being frozen in time and place -suddenly feeling overwhelmed and wondering what I had gotten myself into and if I was going to be able to handle this. The moment passed quickly and the next day, we had some free time, so on my own and without telling anyone I made my way back to that same spot as the day before – now I was fine and began my long, magical, and joyful journey in a land called Jamaica.

Every day was new. Every day was learning. The nature, colors, food, music, the Patios, the people young and old. Every day was a joy.

Reflecting back on my time in Jamaica, I recall the time my parents visited – my mother had never flown before and would never get on a plane again but her week touring the island with me was one of our most precious times together.

I have always been a proud American and one thing that makes me still proud of America is JFK's vision of a Peace Corps. When I returned to New York, I applied to many jobs and the one I ended up landing I have stayed with for over 33 years. I attribute my success to the skills and yes, to the joy that I gained from my experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer. I plan to retire next year and so hope to have more free time to return to Jamaica, Land I Love!



Richard "Dick" Pyle, Ph.D
Group 7

Jamaica, Peace Corps and Me at 60!

I was a member of Jamaica VII from 1966-68, and to say the Peace Corps has impacted me is definitely an understatement!

One of the projects I was successful with during my two years of service was establishing a Chamber of Commerce that later evolved into the Lucea, Hanover Parish Rotary Club.

After returning home and completing my Ph.D, I worked in academia where I was successful in establishing service-learning projects in Lucea under the auspices and in cooperation with the Lucea Rotary Club and my local Rotary Clubs. These projects, lasting 2 to 3 weeks with 15 to 20 students per project, began in the late 70's and continue today. Over a thousand students have participated in what is a mini Peace Corps experience.

Students lived with middle class families and worked in the primary schools as teacher aids and conducted afternoon recreation programs. In the evenings, local leaders present seminars on topics such as challenges to development, social and cultural dimensions of Jamaica, and the history of Jamaica. I led these groups for over 15 years during my tenure at Alma College and The University of Texas where I was the Director of Counseling and Career Development.

I was able to introduce the idea to other schools including my undergraduate alma mater and Hollins University, where two of my daughters attended. Hollins has made the project a part of their curriculum and continues it today, having started in 1988.



Mary Baker Pengelley
83-87

My experience in Jamaica was truly life transforming and I hope that others who desire to live and learn more about themselves and the world may also find this to be their story through PCJ.

I went to Jamaica in 1983 with a new college degree in physical therapy to work at St. Christopher's School for the Deaf in Brownstown, St. Ann on their multi-handicapped unit. With my extra time, I also volunteered at Alexandria Hospital and St. Ann's Hospital and made several trips to the Mona Rehabilitation Centre and the Bustamante Hospital for Children.

This allowed me to collaborate with several Jamaica 'physios', such as Wilbert Williams, an English trained physiotherapist who happened to also be completely blind - but all of them helped me learn to navigate the healthcare system better in Jamaica. After 2 years, a Jamaican physio was hired at the school to replace me and I joined PVO Ltd. for the next 2 years, traveling with a mobile team of pediatric special educators and therapists throughout rural Jamaica to serve children with special needs in local health clinics and their homes.

I made regular home visits on a small motorbike to places like Wait-A-Bit, Cave Valley, and Aboukir to see kids, then worked with local craftsmen to build special chairs or walkers to help them be more independent. During the summer holidays, PVO Ltd. sponsored weeklong family training at St. Christopher's School, to give parents an opportunity to meet other families with children with special needs and learn how to best care for their children at home. It was 38 years ago that I went to Jamaica as a PCV hoping to make a small difference in a few children's lives. But looking back now, I see that instead, Jamaica made a difference in a big way in my life.

I met my husband in Jamaica and today my work continues with children with special needs, traveling from mansions on Palm Beach Island to small homes or apartments in rural Belle Glade, as well as to other countries such as Costa Rica, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Mexico. I love learning about other cultures, trying new languages and experiencing different foods (have you ever eaten ants, the 'caviar of Guatemala'?)

If I had to state what is the one thing in my life that has had the biggest impact on who I am today, I would have to say it was my PCJ experience. I will be always grateful to PCJ for giving me a broader view of life, many lifelong friends, and a beautiful "Jamerican" family.

PEACE CORPS

STORIES

The following reflections are from Peace Corps Volunteers who were in the field serving over the last ten years.

Area of Focus: Climate Smart Agriculture

My community is a traditional rural Jamaican farming community. The farms there are small, growing a wide variety of crops with an absurd amount of fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides used on each one, often incorrectly applied. However, I have a couple farmers who have expressed an interest in organic farming. The costs of all these chemicals are simply too high for them to keep up and still make a profit, thus any method where they can keep growing these crops to be big and healthy and where they get to keep most of the profits is something they are willing to try.

Into this category falls Cutie, a teacher who has since retired from education in order to farm full time to sustain her family of 2 children and several grandchildren. She had expressed to me before that she wished to produce some of her cash crops with no chemicals as well. She's also a Rastafarian and is mindful of things she puts in her body. I was so excited to have someone approach me rather than the other way around about organic farming that I went out to her farm and gave her some small tips about compost and using her manure more effectively.

Peace Corps, in its perfect timing, released an opportunity for a seminar on permaculture farming just one parish away. Cutie was so excited to go, she read all the material we were sent beforehand and wanted to have full discussions of some of the techniques before we had even gone. The whole weekend was an amazing experience where I was able to learn so much, but more importantly, Cutie was also learning so much. She sat at rapt attention the entire weekend, scribbling things down and asking questions.

I also got to listen to her tell stories of different things she had tried on her farm and what worked and what failed, and she found explanations for all these results through permaculture. She found out how many nutrients she was taking from her field by burning the weeds, by not composting her manure and by heavily tilling the soil. She learned how to incorporate her home, goats, donkeys, bananas, pine, cane and tomatoes into one fluid system of farming.

On the last day of the seminar, I saw her drawing out her plot and reorganizing the entire area according to the principles of permaculture and she asked me questions and was making plans for the future.

When we got home, we were both so inspired and motivated that we both got to work right away, me on the school plot and she on her personal farm. In the coming weeks I was very busy and didn't see her for a long period of time. Then about a month after the seminar weekend, I heard Cutie's voice yelling very loudly down the road. I walked a little faster to see what was going on, I saw Cutie and another farmer in a heated debate over a burning pile of banana leaves. It turns out that Cutie had gotten into an argument trying to convince the other farmer not to burn his organic waste but to use it as mulch over the rest of his crops.

Unfortunately, the farmer didn't look like he was about to budge on this issue and wasn't pleased at having a woman tell him how to farm on his own property, so we ended up having to leave. However, as I looked over at Cutie, we gave each other a small smile, she really had absorbed the information at the seminar, not only was she practicing but she was also preaching.

Of course, it's going to take a little time for the other farmers to look and listen to her example and see the benefits from when she reaps that gorgeous new crop of pine from her composted, mulched and healthy soil, but I feel confident that she's definitely changed her method of farming and won't be going back.

Area of Focus: Climate Smart Agriculture & Income Generation



A major challenge in the Irish Town, Redlight, and Middleton area is the denuded nature of the soil in combination with the contamination from the use of Glyphosate and other forms of defoliants, pesticides, and petroleum-based fertilizers.

In combination with the runoff of soil during heavy rainfall, building and maintaining soil health is a major challenge that is expected only to increase with global climate disruptions.

If the single issue of soil health alone could be addressed, significant economic and ecologically sustainable progress could be underway.

Peanut brittle, peanut shakes, and plain and salted peanuts are sold throughout the island. Peanuts are easy and cheap to grow and can be harvested every three months; thus, making it possible to harvest four (4) crops per year.

Peanut price trade at between 1800 – 4000 JD per box and enjoy a relatively high price compared to coffee, especially when the cost of inputs is considered, peanuts are a better investment. In fact, in areas where coffee is heavily grown, peanuts are an excellent inter-crop for several reasons – peanuts are a good nitrogen fixer for denuded, overworked soil as well as a good anchoring source to prevent runoff during flash floods. The inter-cropping initiative is promising.

Now, we have the chance to provide peanuts to a peanut-butter manufacturer in Kingston – the Jamaican Peanut Butter Factory. As such, we have an excellent opportunity to attain organic inputs such as goat and rabbit manure and urine in addition to locking in minimum prices that will be more predictable than coffee and other commodities. The big question: Can peanuts grow, and more importantly, produce at the elevation of Irish Town and above?

Area of Focus: Climate Smart Agriculture

Clarendon is perhaps the parish in Jamaica that sees the smallest amount of tourism. As a result, this means that much of the money from the huge tourism industry in Jamaica does not go into the parish of Clarendon. Bull Head Mountain is the geographic center of Jamaica: the coordinates at which the island is calculated. It is one of the tallest peaks in the central mountain range of Jamaica and is a site that holds cultural significance. The Bull Head Forest Reserve is also a place of valuable biological diversity and natural resources. However, little to no tourists ever visit.

Bull Head Mountain or the surrounding communities. Also unfortunately, in the past, there was deforestation in the area and planting of some non-native tree species for lumber production that have proliferated in the region and reduced the growing range of native tree species in the forest. For this reason, the Northern Rio Minho Local Forest Management Committee (LFMC) is focused on reforesting the Bull Head Forest Reserve with native tree species and developing the Bull Head Mountain as an ecotourism destination.



This past June, as part of this project, I partnered with the LFMC to plant native tree species at the peak area of the Bull Head Mountain. Six community and LFMC members came out and planted 77 indigenous species of trees on June 5th.

We took pictures of the event and shared them with the LFMC at the meeting after the event and this also served to help motivate the group for continued action for the project. Pictures and information about this project were also shared at meetings for other community-based organizations in the region. This contributed to increasing the surrounding communities' awareness and support of the project.



Area of Focus: Generate Agriculture-Related Income

In Wilmington, it is quite common that women are the heads of household, as well as the primary breadwinners. It is in this fact that my supervisor and I identified a need for additional employment opportunities. In a joint discussion between a PCV, myself, and Ms. Maddy, the concept of creating not just value-added products, but

natural beauty products came to mind as a potential option to increase productivity and income.

This idea came to us as seasonal tree crops such as limes were beginning to rot due to a lacking market. We felt that by introducing some of these techniques to women within the community that we could provide them with the groundwork to either start their own product lines, or feed into a larger community group which could market these products. Over the course of a two-day period, the PCV and I hosted training about product development.

These training included some basic products that could be produced in the community with little external inputs and could be sold or even used in the household. We showcased a number of products that could be made with some of the same basic ingredients. These ingredients that we used, which are common within Wilmington, are turmeric, honey, coconut oil, sugar, rose water, limes, and chili peppers. All of these can be combined in numerous ways to make a variety of products.

Another aspect we reviewed was packaging and marketing. We showcased to the group how we could use plant "trash" such as coconut shells, husk, and calabash shells to make a naturally appealing product that was also environmentally friendly. This training was beneficial to the women of the Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers group who are looking to expand their capabilities within the community and promote their product development to a greater Jamaican audience.

The women who attended this training were highly engaged. I have never seen this level of engagement with community members since I arrived in Wilmington.

Area of Focus: Working with School & Community



While conducting the Community and Sector Inventory (CASI), one of the main needs articulated was a computer lab for the school. With the desire to empower students to take ownership of earning these themselves to contribute to their school, our school decided to participate in Lasco REAP's environmental competition.

As part of this effort, we entered in 10 different sections. We planted 1,500 pepper plants and reaped 309 lbs. of peppers which the principal sold to jerk centers. We identified and planted 168 different indigenous fruit trees. We identified and labeled 18 different bearing fruit trees on the compound and 5 nonbearing trees with painted recycled event poster signs. We recycled 132,082 plastic bottles.

Students researched and wrote poems, dub poems, songs, and essays. Students made outfits from recycled materials which were incorporated to an annual Mr. and Miss Culturally Aware Pageant. As a result of students, staff, and the community's dedication and hard work, we won \$100,000 JD for most bottles collected and 10 computers for first place overall.

Community members have also audibly expressed how this demonstrates the power of the community coming together and how this may increase enrollment in the fall as it "puts the school back on the map". There has also been a noticeable behavior change as shop owners and community members have still collected bottles and have expressed dismay that we are not picking them up from them at this time.

Area of Focus: Camps & Clubs

Throughout training, I learned about other volunteers across the world starting Club GLOWs (Girls Leading Our World) at their schools. I loved this idea, and when I got to my school, I investigated to see if Club GLOW was something that anyone would be interested in. I spoke to the teachers and students and received an overwhelming call of support for a girls' leadership club. I had many conversations during June and the beginning of July discussing this club with teachers and with my principal.

Over the summer, I connected with the president of the Jamaican Association of Social Workers (JASW), who lives in a larger town about half an hour away from my site. The JASW connected me with two German social work students who were going to spend six months completing their practicum in Jamaica.

When the students arrived on the island, I met with them and let them know my intentions for starting the club. The students were very excited and wanted to support me and my school. When the school year began again in September,

I talked to my principal about Club GLOW, and he allowed me to coordinate with the teachers to get 10 girls from Grades 5 and 6 into my club, and he requested that the administrative assistant be my counterpart for the club.

The German students have been present at every meeting so far and have brought valuable input and empowerment to the club members and club facilitators. The GLOW girls are able to attend club meetings weekly and gain exposure from women around the world—Jamaicans, Americans, and Germans, all in their classroom at once.

The GLOW girls involved have already elected a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. They look forward to the club every week and show wild enthusiasm during the club meetings.



Area of Focus: Working with School & Community

My school is a small, rural "bush" primary school in Jamaica. There are 57 children in our school and when I first got to the community one of the primary projects they wanted to do was an environmental club. Unfortunately, none of the current teachers were interested in mentoring the club and only the substitute teacher and I wanted to do it. It took a while, but after a few meetings and persuasion of the teachers we managed to motivate them into supporting and participating in the activities with the environmental club.

Additionally, we decided that we would sign up our school for LASCO Reap, a national environmental awareness competition which could provide resources to the school and provide our students with an environmental awareness program. It was decided that we would participate in all categories available in the competition to have a better chance at winning. During the month of September 2017, we began our project by telling parents at the PTA that their support and participation was necessary in order to have a bigger chance at winning.

Afterwards, we began collecting bottles from businesses, households, etc. including a bottle drive each week to clean out the community. We also began calling LASCO Reap constantly to better address our questions or doubts about the process. Additionally, we began to plant trees and clean out our community garden. Also, we created an energy conservation program, participated in the creative areas of the competition and collaborated with other schools who had participated in order to receive and utilize the best information.

The entire process was documented with pictures, videos, logs and a GPS tagging system. We collected approximately 55,000 bottles, planted around 500 trees, and got pumpkin, pepper, tomatoes, and bananas, from our garden to use in the canteen which was a great accomplishment for our small school. Finally, all this information was submitted via email in April, therefore, the only thing we had to do was wait. After a month and a half of waiting and many calls in order to see when we would get a response, we had lost hope of winning anything.

One day, our principal received the call that we were invited to the Luncheon of finalists at the Pegasus Hotel in Kingston. This was amazing news for the entire school community. This would mean that our school was one of the top 20 schools amongst 500 Jamaican schools participating in the competition. Although we did not get the first prize, not the second, nor the third, we did get a prize for best dub poem written as well as \$10,000JMD, which will be added to the funding of our school fence.

Our students were very happy with the results and now have a sense of ownership over their environmental club and the impact that they can have in the island even though they are a small school from the "bush", as Jamaicans like to say. All the teachers are now more willing to work with the club and people in the community are more willing to be involved in any way to help support the school and the children











IN MEMORIAM

"... we have, in this country, an immense reservoir of such men and women - anxious to sacrifice their energies and time and toil to the cause of world peace and human progress."

~ U.S. President John F. Kennedy

March 1, 1961



WE HONOR THE MEMORY OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO
DIED IN SERVICE AS PEACE CORPS JAMAICA VOLUNTEERS

JOHN WILLIS, 1970

BETHANNE BAHLER, 1974

DARRYL ADKINS, 1981

JEANNE CORBIN, 1981



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