



 J-FLAG's
**ANNUAL REPORT
2015**

THE *Pride* OF A PEOPLE
BREAKING THE RULES OF OPPRESSION



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MESSAGES



IVAN CRUICKSHANK - CHAIRPERSON

2015 was an impactful year for the Jamaican LGBT community as reflected in the number of key initiatives, collaboration and strengthening of relationships within the community as well as with our allies. Though there were some struggles, it is important to note the unprecedented successes of the year. Our work throughout the year reflect continuing efforts to give life to our new strategic direction and seek to build on the foundation laid over the past years.

The activities outlined in this report underline our mission to improve inclusiveness especially among sub-populations of LGBT members while acknowledging that success requires the perspectives and efforts of community members, service providers, policymakers, medical professionals, educators, and all others who are in one way or another working to advance human rights.



During the year, deliberate efforts to mobilize and engage the transgender and lesbian/bisexual women within the community have yielded amazing results. As well, through J-FLAG's new youth programme there has been greater engagement of young LGBT people as they have risen to the call to become more involved with, and lend their voices to the advancement of the community. These efforts will be built on in the coming years.

J-FLAG's health programme continues to liaise with the health sector to offer expert guidance in reducing stigma and discrimination faced by those who access healthcare making clear that HIV is much more than an issue for health professionals. Through this programme, greater focus has also been placed on access to health service for the transgender community, where previously there was no particular attention placed.

While recognizing the limitations of our interventions in reaching all who may need support, the Support Services and Intervention Unit continues to be a beacon of hope for a number of individuals who need very basic social services including but not limited to care packages.

The work and impact that J-FLAG has had can be greatly attributed to the strengthening of the team and a revitalized volunteer corp. The staff has doubled within the year and continues to add innovative thinking and passionate minds to the advancement of the work. The LGBT community itself has played a large role as their spirit of volunteerism and greater engagement has been reflected in the reach and strengthening of the organization's brand in a positive way.

Despite the challenges of a limiting legal and policy environment and much opposition to the advancement of rights for the LGBT community, the year has ended on a bright note with great expectations for what is to come in 2016. This reflects the fact that the organization's strategic approach has been reaping tremendous rewards and as such J-FLAG is positioned to achieve a number of its organizational objectives. As we celebrate our achievements over the past year, we will continue to build on the established relationships and partnerships while strengthening our reach within the community as we move into another year of advancement for LGBT Jamaicans.



Ivan Crickshank



DANE LEWIS - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2015 was indeed an exciting year for the LGBT and ally community.

Much of J-FLAG's work was centered around the theme of resilience. This featured highly in the execution of our 3rd Annual Larry Chang Human Rights Symposium and PRIDE JA 2015 which were opportunities we used to illustrate our strength and courage as a people, as a community of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons as well as allies.

Pride was a special time for us to come together despite all the challenges we face as a community. Despite the intolerance and outright prejudice we face on a daily basis we can celebrate our resilience as a community and build a sense of pride and belonging in being LGBT Jamaicans. The timing was particularly appropriate as we chose the Emancipation and Independence period to celebrate PRIDE as sadly, for too long we have been told we don't belong. We have been made to feel less than and unworthy of the equal and fair treatment

that we deserve. It was a time to break free from the oppression and celebrate the resilience, courageousness, beauty and diverse talents that exude from the community.

The strides that have been are as a result of those of us who daily stand up defending our right to be and demand that they be protected and promoted, and that we be respected and appreciated. It is no secret that we, in our own individual and collective ways, contribute immensely to the development of our communities and country. We are becoming bolder and braver, more visible and actively participating in different forms of advocacy in a variety of spaces all with one aim – equality for all. In fact, for many of us it is because of our deep love for our country why we choose to stand up against intolerance in our homes and communities but most importantly—our dedication to nation building and securing peace and justice for all Jamaicans.

We are teachers, mothers, fathers, social workers, lawyers, doctors, civil servants, taxi and bus drivers, comedians, scholars, athletes, models and fashion designers, actors, socialites, and barbers and hairdressers. Every day when we step out of our homes we demonstrate our resilience through our boldness, fearlessness, and service.

We sincerely hope that through the initiatives that were undertaken this year, we were able to inspire you, give you hope, instill a sense of pride in being LGBT or Ally and enlist you in the advocacy and activism to make Jamaica a more hospitable place for LGBT people. I want to thank our allies who stood with us in 2015 and who supported our efforts not just on the sidelines cheering us on but the many who were also on the frontline with us. Thank you.

As we boldly take on 2016 let us make Inclusion, Equality and Respect pillars of how we engage and support each other in the coming years.



HEALTH FOR ALL

TOWARDS A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO HIV PREVENTION, TREATMENT, CARE AND SUPPORT

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



ABOUT J-FLAG

In an effort to build a Jamaican society that respects and protects the rights of everyone, J-FLAG is committed to promoting social change, empowering the LGBT community, and building tolerance for and acceptance of LGBT people.

Since 2012, the organisation has been operating under four broad objectives:

1. Increase public tolerance and understanding of LGBT peoples from 17%
2. Transform J-FLAG into an effective umbrella group to improve service to the LGBT community
3. Create the foundation for legal reform
4. Increase organisational Sustainability

In pursuit of these objectives, the following strategic approaches are being used:

1. Create a powerful J-FLAG brand whose promise is that of a caring, value driven organisation dedicated to promoting inherent human dignity and the right to be.
2. Strong, proactive leadership of the LGBT Community.
3. Collaborate with other human rights groups and stakeholders in pursuit of incremental gains against all forms of discrimination.
4. Create a culture of excellence that attracts creative, high-calibre personnel who will develop efficient operating systems and a buoyant stream of donors.



MISSION

To promote social change by empowering the Jamaican LGBT community and build tolerance for and acceptance of the LGBT community by the wider Jamaican society

VISION

The creation of a Jamaican society that respects and protects the human rights and inherent dignity of all individuals irrespective of their sexual orientation and gender identity: A Jamaica where there is the freedom to be, for all people.

VALUES

J-FLAG promotes the values of all-inclusivity, diversity, equality, fairness, and love. These values are at the heart of all we do, as we seek to become effective agents of social change.

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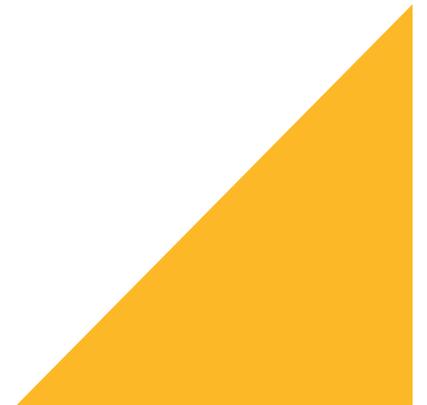
Top Achievements in 2015 for LGBT Rights

Jamaica continues to make significant strides in improving the human rights situation for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community despite the retention of the archaic “buggery laws” which criminalize same-sex intimacy and helps in normalizing homophobia and transphobia.

2015 was another successful and progressive year for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in spite of the discrimination and violence that remain pervasive. The year’s accomplishments were tremendous and will undoubtedly lead to even more successes for the community in 2016. These achievements can best be summed up with one word – phenomenal.

The year was marked by the momentous celebration of Jamaica’s first ever national LGBT PRIDE celebration from August 1 to 5 which demonstrated the resilience, strength and courage of the community in spite of the struggles that persist. Additionally, the tremendous support by parliamentarians and businesses for equality, and to the LGBT community in particular, must not go unnoticed.

This list, which was compiled based on recommendations from J-FLAG’s staff, LGBT people and allies, highlights the top ten achievements for LGBT people in Jamaica for the year 2015.





Celebrating PRiDE JA 2015

PRiDE JA 2015 was one of the most talked about events/initiatives on the Jamaican LGBT calendar this year and received wide coverage from local, regional and international media. Incident free and a resounding success, the five-day celebration began on August 1 - Emancipation Day and culminated on August 5. It was aptly themed The Pride of a People: Breaking the Rules of Oppression and brought together hundreds of members of the LGBT community and allies.

PRIDE JA featured a range of activities including a 'Coming Out' symposium and a flash mob at the symbolic Emancipation Park in New Kingston. Award winning actress, Ellen Page and international reggae artiste, Tanya Stephens were celebrities in attendance at some of the events. Notably, the Mayor of Kingston & St Andrew, Senator Dr. Angela Brown-Burke delivered a thought-provoking and emotional address at the Opening Ceremony and Justice Minister, Hon. Mark Golding issued a public endorsement of the pride celebrations. This is monumental, to have forged relationships with allies from the government who are willing to align publicly with the LGBT movement.

Addressing Stigma and Discrimination in Public Health Facilities



J-FLAG and The Ministry of Health's National HIV/STI Programme, and National Family Planning Board have been working together to address stigma and discrimination and improve access to health services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The initiative is a critical component of the national HIV response since stigma and discrimination are among the primary barriers that limit access to health and social services among men who have sex with men, sex workers and people living with HIV (PLHIV).

Over the course of the year, two-hundred and fifty (250) healthcare workers have participated in training and sensitization programmes on the provision of non-discriminatory health services for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) and issues relating to LGBT people and human rights. An additional twenty healthcare workers were trained over a two-day period around providing HIV and other health services to transgender people and over three hundred healthcare workers and other stakeholders in the national HIV response were sensitized around transgender issues at the National HIV Retreat in November.

In addition, a total of three hundred and ninety-four (394) persons in four public health facilities were sensitized on issues around stigma and discrimination, human rights and the Ministry of Health's Client Complaint Mechanism.

New LBT Women Organisation Launched

In February, Women's Empowerment for Change (WE-Change), the women's affiliate of J-FLAG, was launched to mobilize and strengthen the role of lesbians, bisexual and transgender women in the human rights movement. Guided by development, feminist, rights and queer thought/theory/ideologies, WE-Change has already



been instrumental in improving partnerships and spurring advocacy within and outside the LGBT community. Most notable is their facilitators training around gender-based and intimate partner violence, diversity and LGBT training for police officers, support group, and open mic night - Orange Lights which addresses violence against women. WE-Change's work thus far is evidence of the fact that 'empowered women, transform communities'.

Establishment of TransWave

TransWave -- a burgeoning resource for important health and lifestyle issues in the Jamaican transgender community -- was established in August directly out of a training facilitated by WE-Change in partnership with J-FLAG under the JASL-UN Trust Fund project to address violence against women and girls and has already been making waves. In just three months, TransWave has done an excellent job shaping the narrative around transgender issues with their



promotion of trans-visibility and awareness and social media engagements. Most notable are the profiles on transgender Jamaicans and the social media campaign Our Voices, Our Stories, which features four transgender persons.

Police Officers Receive Training in Diversity and Human Rights



In September, in keeping with its mandate to serve and protect all Jamaicans without partiality, two-hundred and thirty police officers participated in a two-day training around human rights and diversity. The training which was organised by a range of stakeholders such as the USAID COMET II Project and included facilitators from WE-Change, the women's affiliate of J-FLAG, focused on improving the capacity of police officers to cater to women and girls, LGBT people, people with disabilities and marginalized youth.

Transgender Fashion Icon Takes the Spotlight

The glamorous Fashion Blogger, Ashley Gordon, who describes herself as minimalist, is no stranger to the Jamaican media. She has graced the social pages of newspapers and last year, she gave an exclusive one-hour interview about her life as a transgender woman living in Jamaica on Impact with award winning journalist, Cliff

Hughes. In September, Ashley was given the Jamaican fashion industry's stamp of approval as a fashion icon, when she was featured in the coveted Style Observer after being interviewed by Novia McDonald-Whyte – the Jamaica Observer's lifestyle editor, herself a celebrated Caribbean Stylista and renowned Lifestyle aristocrat.



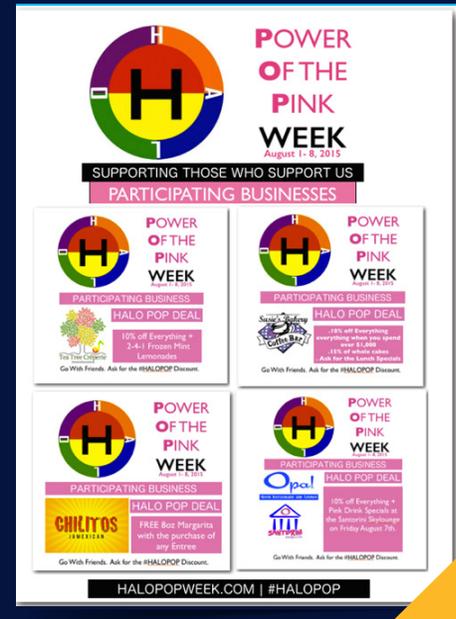
Local Eateries Entice and Show Support for LGBT Patrons

As part of the PRIDE JA 2015 celebrations, J-FLAG partnered with HALO Events which hosted HALO POP (Power of Pink) Week - an annual event, and guide to LGBT-friendly places to 'eat, drink, stay, play, and shop'.

During the August 1-8 period, using a unique code, patrons at a number of LGBT-friendly Kingston & St Andrew eateries could access special pride discounts which were brokered by HALO Events.

Many LGBT persons and allies welcomed the deals and indicated their commitment to continue patronizing these businesses. Members of the PRiDE JA 2015 Planning Committee reported being pleased with the warm and friendly experiences at these eateries. The participating businesses were Chilitos Jamexican Restaurant, Opa Greek Restaurant, Susie's Bakery and Terrace Bar, and Tea Tree Creperie.

Following PRiDE, LGBT persons have been talking more about their experiences at these and other eateries. As a commitment to this inclusiveness some businesses even celebrated milestones in LGBT relationships with either gestures in house or by postings on their Instagram.



We must use this space to highlight the fact that a number of businesses are increasingly willing to engage us, and serve the community without prejudice

Parents Embrace their LGBT Children and Help to Prevent Homelessness

Through its "Parents' Support Group", an initiative aimed at reducing displacement and homelessness among LGBT youth, J-FLAG continued to provide support to parents who are having difficulties with understanding and accepting their children who are members of the LGBT community. Through tears, frustration and sadness, these parents have grown tremendously and are now at a stage where they can show compassion,



tolerance, support, and acceptance towards their children. They have also formed a network with other parents and have fervently stated that they will be each other's support. Some of them have been instrumental in preventing other children and youth from being kicked out of their homes and reintegrating them back in their families.

Parents who were once ashamed to acknowledge their children as LGBT or even say the words lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, now accept and love them. They no longer define their children by their sexual orientation; they see them as people with goals, dreams, and obstacles who happen to be LGBT. Of note is the devotion and passion of the two fathers in the group. These men are committed to their children, and are willing to proudly say to other family members, to their communities, and to society that they are fathers of gay children.

Montego Bay Celebrates Pride

As if PRIDE JA 2015 was not enough, on October 25, Jamaican-born attorney-at-law and gay rights activist, Maurice Tomlinson spearheaded the staging of the very first Montego Bay Pride. Several persons from the LGBT community and allies in and around Montego Bay came out to celebrate



their humanity and dignity in the tourist capital. The event featured a flash stand, film screening, and pool party.

J-FLAG Demonstrates Leadership in the HIV Response

J-FLAG has developed a multifaceted HIV programme that works with parliamentarians, healthcare workers, and clients of health services as well as other stakeholders to achieve HEALTH FOR ALL. This year, J-FLAG hosted two high level fora which when combined brought together over five hundred nurses, doctors, parliamentarians, diplomats, people living with HIV, advocates, and other stakeholders in the national HIV response. On March 4, over three hundred persons joined J-FLAG and its partners at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in a forum on promoting rights-based approaches to HIV prevention, treatment, and care where Ambassador Deborah Birx, the US Global AIDS Coordinator was the keynote speaker. On December 1, observed globally as World AIDS Day, 200 persons gathered to commemorate the day to discuss the efficacy of a more



integrated approach to HIV. J-FLAG has also worked with the Ministry of Health's HIV Programme and National Family Planning Board to develop and revise protocols, guides and standards of care for healthcare workers when treating with LGBT people. In November, J-FLAG was given an award for High Institutional Valuate by the National HIV Programme for its exemplary work towards ending AIDS in Jamaica.

OBJECTIVES



4000+

**PEOPLE
ENGAGED**

13

PARISHES

40+

**PARTNERS
& DONORS**

50+

VOLUNTEERS

12

STAFF

PRIDE JA 2015

Pride symbolizes a period of celebration for the LGBT community to mark the continued strides that are made in spite of the stigma, discrimination, and violence people face. This year, J-FLAG hosted its PRIDE JA celebration under the theme “The Pride of a People: Breaking the Rules of Oppression.”

The celebration was an eventful,

incident-free week which comprised an opening ceremony, an open mic concert, an art exhibition, a coming out symposium titled “Telling My Story”, a women’s concert dubbed “An Intimate Evening with Anna Mariah” and closed off with Prism at the Hope Gardens. The events were publicly endorsed by Minister of Justice, Mark Golding in a public statement and Mayor of Kingston &

St Andrew, Senator Dr Angela Brown-Burke who was the speaker at the PRIDE JA Opening Ceremony. Respect Jamaica, the multi corporate initiative promoting respect and tolerance, endorsed and promoted the week of activities on its social media channels. The week also featured open endorsements from Jamaican Recording Artist Diana King who came out as a lesbian in recent years,





and Jamaican Recording Artiste Tanya Stephens - a longstanding supporter of the LGBT community and human rights, who added to the complement of high profile leaders who endorsed the activities.

The brave and audacious move to stage a pride event in what is regarded as one of 'the most homophobic places on earth' attracted major coverage from local, regional and international press which was boosted by presence of Canadian award winning actress, Ellen Page at two of the opening activities - the Flash Mob and the Opening Ceremony. International news giants such as The Guardian, Yahoo News, and Associated Press all published articles about the week's offerings. Local media entities such as The Jamaica Gleaner, The Jamaica Observer also published articles about PRIDE JA 2015.

There was tremendous support from the local LGBT community which came fashioned as endorsements from entertainment promoters who formed a mutual partnership with J-FLAG and branded their events as a part of the official pride package. Local eateries Opa, Chillitos, Suzie's Bakery and Tea Tree Creperie provided POP (Power of the Pink) week special to customers using the code "Halo POP Week" - a Halo Events Group initiative - for pride.



The foregoing demonstrates the marked growth of tolerances and goes a long way in bolstering the confidence of the LGBT movement in Jamaica. The willingness of popular establishments to publicly support the week of celebrations is symbolic of this said positive growth and will undoubtedly cause a domino effect among other corporate entities at the next staging of PRIDE.





THE GREAT DEBATE

2ND ANNUAL TERTIARY LEVEL DEBATE COMPETITION



In partnership with the Mary Seacole Hall and UWI Leads at the University of the West Indies and USAID Comet II Project, J-FLAG hosted its second annual tertiary level debate competition.

The motion debated was *'This house believes all forms of penetrative sex should be classified as rape'* to focus on the review of the Sexual Offences Act and highlighted a number of the inadequacies in the Act, in keeping with the recommendations made by VERJ (Voices for Equal Rights and Justice) and J-FLAG as an independent entity.

This year's competition saw as many as 160 persons attending to see the debating societies of UWI Mona, UWI Western Jamaica Campus, and the University of Technology vie for the

top prize. There was a potential reach of over 88,000 people via Twitter as there a live tweet using the hashtag #SOARreview. Senator Kamina Johnson Smith and member of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament reviewing the Sexual Offences Act brought greetings.

#SOARreview

2015-04-16 12:00:00 - 2015-04-16 12:00:00

Total tweets: **747**

Contributors: **73**

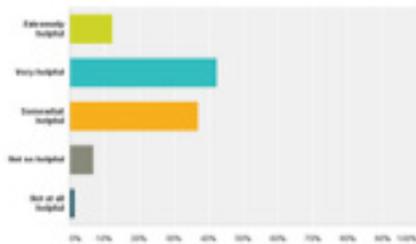
Total audience: **88,654**

Measured time: **94h**

A video snippet of the event is available [here](#)

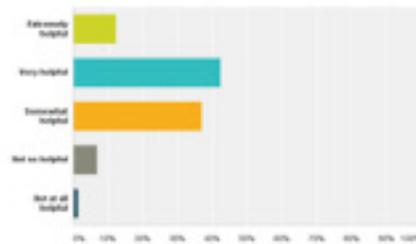
Q1: How helpful was the content presented at #Debate2015?

Answered 79 Skipped 0



Q1: How helpful was the content presented at #Debate2015?

Answered 79 Skipped 0



GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR WOMEN

In February we hosted the graduation ceremony for the 20 women who successfully completed our Public Policy Training Programme for Women. The ceremony was hosted by Krystal Tomlinson and featured UN Women's Taitu Heron as Keynote Speaker. Special remarks were given by Programme Consultant and Development Specialist Joan Grant Cummings. Approximately 120 guests were at this invitation only event. Paige Andrew, programme valedictorian offered a remarkable speech that spoke to the efficiency and need of the programme and shared many life skills learned regarding advocacy for women, and LBT women in particular. It is from this programme that the women's affiliate of J-FLAG - Women's Empowerment for Change was formed.



RAVE FOR YOUR RIGHTS



In March, the organisation participated in a forum entitled, Rave Your Rights, at the UWI Western Jamaica Campus to sensitise students about their rights and responsibilities and engage participants on a wide range of issues related to LGBT people.

The workshop was organized by a group of final year CARIMAC students and provided the ideal environment for promoting awareness of the human rights to the fifty or more students who were present. The organisation distributed t-shirts, business cards, bookmarkers and other IEC materials and presented on human rights, tolerance and equality as well as showcased the #iChooseLove memes.

#HashtagLunchBag

In April and December, the organisation participated in the Global Shapers Kingston Hub - a youth entity under the World Economic Forum (WEF) - charitable event, HashtagLunchBag. Members of staff, and members of the LGBT community and allies joined the cause to help make lunch packages for 1500 persons on each in and around Kingston & St Andrew who live in Children's Homes, Places of Safety, Homes for the Elderly, and on the streets.



PRISM

The IDAHOT Edition

PRISM was the climax of our IDAHOT 2015 celebrations and was very well received by the LGBT and ally community. PRISM is a brand that seeks to highlight the creative arts talent within the LGBT and ally community, as well as persons in the creative arts who are regarded as LGBT friendly.

For the IDAHOT edition, in addition to song, dance and poetry we added a tune-fi-tune DJ competition, which featured songs about love, unity, oneness, empowerment, and community. This was the highlight of the evening given the profound statements of support for the community from the competing DJs (DJ David & DJ Ravas) who have become seasoned allies for the community and who play at a number of LGBT events. We also added a motivational speech to the programme, which was eloquently delivered by Fabian Thomas.

The event was oversubscribed. Between 350 and 400 persons were in attendance at PRISM, many of whom indicated that they would definitely attend its next staging.

The event was a success, and was the 'talk of the town' on the night of May 17th. Several persons also shared their experience on social media using the hashtag #PRISM. More events like PRISM are needed to build the LGBT movement in

Jamaica given its potential to reach a wide cross-section of LGBT persons and allies, as evidenced by the turnout from persons in academia, entrepreneurship, private sector, civil society, and government.



YOUTH LEADERS' LGBT SENSITIVITY TRAINING

In January, J-FLAG partnered with the Ministry of Youth & Culture to build the capacity of more than twenty youth leaders from across the country around human rights and LGBT issues. 65% of the participants were between the ages 18-24 years, the remaining 35% were between the ages 25-29 years. 80% of them identify as Christian, 10% were not affiliated with any religious group and the remaining 10% were Rastafarian and Atheist. The vast majority of them have never participated in LGBT sensitivity training but believe youth workers and leaders need training on engaging LGBT youth.

The workshop covered the following themes: Human Rights and LGBT advocacy in Jamaica, Responsibilities as Youth Workers, Exploring Values, Diversity, Human Sexuality and Gender, Needs Assessment of issues facing LGBT Youth, and Challenging Stigma and discrimination.

More than 90% of the participants left the workshop with a wealth of knowledge that they never had before and are equipped with the tools to serve LGBT youth. All youth leaders who participated said they would recommend the training to other youth workers and leaders and 90% of them indicated that they would facilitate a similar training.



GBV FACILITATORS' TRAINING

In May, the organisation partnered with one of its affiliate, WE-Change and Woman Inc to host a Facilitators' Training on Arming the LBT and Ally Community with the Tools to Respond to Gender-based Violence and Intimate Partner Violence. The training was aimed at building your capacity to facilitate community outreach sessions with women and transgender men in the LGBT community through a series of interactive trainings in urban and rural Jamaica. The session was facilitated by Joyce and Ronnie from Woman Inc and will included legal literacy around the Domestic Violence Act.



#ITSUP2US

Violence Against Women Advocacy Training

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women Project of which this LBT advocacy component is a part, is being spearheaded by the Jamaica AIDS Support for Life with the support of WE-Change, the women's affiliate of J-FLAG. The programme sought to increase the knowledge of LBT women and transgender men around issues related to violence against women, HIV and the legislative milieu that affects how and what protection against VAW looks like for the LBT community. Additionally, the programme was aimed at building the capacity of LBT women and transgender men to advocate for legislative and social change that would impact positively on the community in keeping with the outcome of the project: 'women and girls affected by HIV have improved legal literacy and advocacy skills to respond to VAW'.

Over fifty persons from across the island participated. They had varying levels of exposure to advocacy, and HIV and/or violence against women (VAW) training; the majority was not previously exposed to much advocacy training. The training programme took the form of one full day training, and a residential training that spanned three exciting and productive days.

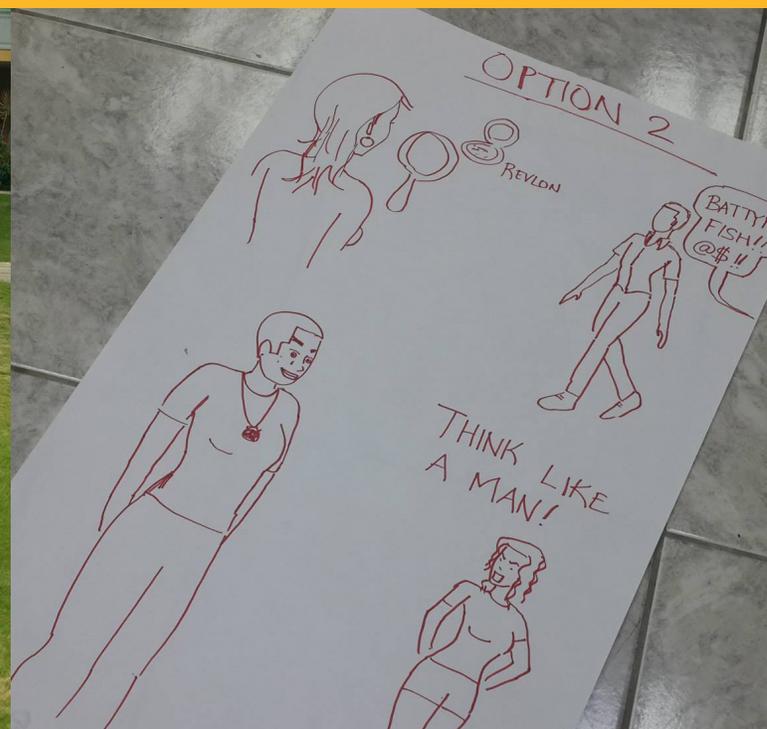
The facilitators employed a variety of techniques to facilitate learning throughout the workshop aimed at building the capacity of participants in an eclectic and practical way. Cooperative learning was central to the workshop as the nature and objectives necessarily warranted this kind of team effort. Advocacy is a joint effort and especially in a context where collaboration is often necessary, group work was utilised as the main vehicle through which participants developed the requisite skills. Learning opportunities were created using videos, simulation, dramatizations, presentations, discussions,

games, music, and interviews. Many opportunities were also created for practice activities such as writing assignments and facilitation exercises. These methods were very effective as they allowed individuals to reflect and honestly present their feelings, while building relationships with other (potential) advocates. A number of educational games were created by participants, letters written to the editor, op-eds drafted, and campaigns designed, all aimed at addressing violence against women.





The evaluations – both quantitative and qualitative – from participants indicate that the workshop was a success as the objectives were met and the overall ratings for all categories were exceptionally high. All project outcomes were met and this report will demonstrate that (i) there was a marked increase in the knowledge level of participants on policies and legislation relating to HIV and VAW; (2) participants believed that they were able to apply knowledge and skills gained to better respond to HIV and VAW related issues; and (3) they had the agency to contribute to changes in programmes, policies and decision-making processes related to HIV and VAW, following their participation in the programme.



TESTIMONIALS

I am now more equipped intellectually on the different legislations, both locally and internationally, and how they affect LBT women and/or transgender men...I left the workshop with a wealth of knowledge that I am now ready to impart on my acquaintances thus creating positive change in building a better Jamaica.'

-Abby

The chosen activities for the J-FLAG, JASL and WE-Change coordinated workshop were quite diverse yet engaging. Every activity offered the opportunity to practically apply the knowledge gained during each learning point... Overall, the experience was intense, enriching, educational and simply superb. I am grateful for being a part of this journey.

-Neisha

Now, I have a clearer idea of how the government relates to my life and how I can relate to it. The various PPT on legislation were a great primer. That grounding gave me the confidence to research further legislation on my own. Another stand out assignment was the one aimed at LBT persons with disabilities -- highlighting such diversity is so important yet often forgotten. The facilitators' materials promoted the intersectionality of all the issues -- GBV, PLHIV, VAW etc. They provided concrete examples of how I could create impact. Now, I feel as if I've made an important transition. For the first time, I can truly say I am on the path to be an informed and active Jamaican citizen.

-Akilah

This workshop is by far the best one I've attended thus far. I left with a wealth of knowledge that I'm more than pleased to share with all who are willing to listen. What stood out to me most was the Domestic Violence Act. After reading on it, I realize that this is a major problem where women's health and their basic human rights are concerned. The teaching methods used in this training were very effective. For me personally it made learning all these information easier and I was able to interact more.

-Nikkia

Before enrolling in this programme, I had little knowledge about issues relating to LBT women, Transgender Men and protection under our laws. Today, I can say I am quite knowledgeable and I will definitely be sharing the information I learned with others. I will also encourage others to be a part of Cohort 2 of this programme as I know it will be beneficial.

-Shawna



LARRY CHANG HUMAN RIGHTS SYMPOSIUM



May 15, 2015 saw the staging of the 3rd Annual Larry Chang Human Rights Symposium which is held annually in observation of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) to honor the work of Larry Chang who founded the first LGBT rights organization in Jamaica—Gay Freedom Movement (GFM) in 1974 and helped to co-found J-FLAG in 1998.

This year's symposium was the largest to date and the relaxed atmosphere in which it was observed was telling of the (slowly) changing attitudes towards tolerance and acceptance; with appropriately plugged entertainment delights, presentations and an emotionally riveting panel discussion, this year's staging definitely achieved its objective of emphasizing resilience within the context of advocacy.

The event ran smoothly, skillfully moderated within context, beginning with the welcome address and opening remarks which were delivered by transgender fashion blogger, Ashley and environmentalist and media personality, Krystal Tomlinson respectively. This year, there were approximately 300 LGBT and allies in attendance—some of whom came from as far as Clarendon, St James, and St Ann who are traditionally not included in these events. These persons represented a wide range of organizations including the National Family Planning Board, Respect Jamaica, Aphrodite's Pride, Jamaica AIDS Support for Life and USAID. With rapt engagement from the audience an enabling environment was created for the panelists who were able to share tales of their own experiences of being a LGBT youth who has responded to the tide of homophobia and intolerance with resilience as a defense mechanism and a tool of advocacy.

The keynote speaker Dr. Micheal Abrahams presence and address at the venue were evidence of the changing attitudes of the society – open support from the ally community. Abrahams kept his points focused on the more pressing issues he has observed to be working against the fight of the LGBT lobby/community in galvanizing respect for their human rights. The panelists - Jomain Mckenzie, Rochelle McFee and Jessica Burton delivered well in their presentations which maintained focus on the theme—“The LGBT Community - a Resilient People.” The reception from the audience was positive to note ranging from the Jodian Pantry’s aptly chosen rendition of “Survivor” to Burton’s tear-jerking address to the audience.

The Post Evaluation Survey conducted by the symposium volunteers reflects a high appreciation for the symposium with 100 percent of the participants indicating that these kinds of initiatives are important to the movement and expressing their appreciation for such a forum in which these issues can be aired. The feedback regarding the speakers, the forum content, whether or not they’d recommend it to a colleague was overall positive with several comments giving commendations on the organization of the event and recommendations on how to improve its quality in subsequent years.



Brand Jamaica Symposium

THE
Re:IMAGINE
JAMAICA
PROJECT

In July, the Programme & Advocacy Manager presented a paper entitled Opportunity in Crisis: (re)Presenting Jamaica—“the Most Homophobic Place on Earth” at the inaugural Brand Jamaica symposium, Re:Imagine Jamaica: Unlimited Possibilities which was staged by The Re:Imagine Jamaica Project in association with the Centre for Leadership & Governance, UWI.



#BeyondHomophobia Symposium



In October, J-FLAG partnered with the Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work and Institute of Caribbean Studies at the University of the West Indies to host a symposium entitled #BeyondHomophobia.

Over 100 persons, most of whom were students, attended the event. Jaevion Nelson, along with Carla Moore, Dr. Danielle Roper and O'Neil Lawrence were the presenters. The opportunity was used to present preliminary findings from a study conducted among over 300 LGBT people across the island.





Reducing Stigma and Discrimination & Improving Access to Health Services

PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS TRAINING

J-FLAG continued to partner with the Ministry of Health's National HIV Programme and National Family Planning Board (NFPB) to address stigma and discrimination and improving the capacity of healthcare workers to provide non-discriminatory services to LGBT people and in particular men who have sex with men.

Ninety-five clinicians from across the island participated in the public health workers training programme which

is now in its third year. At the end of the training programme participants had increased knowledge about some critical issues affecting the LGBT community. Prior to the training programme 65% of participants had never been trained in MSM-related health issues and 70% had never been trained to offer counseling about anal sex. An overwhelming majority of the participants said the training programme positively impacted how they treat with members of the

LGBT community when catering to their health needs at the various clinics. The training was assessed by participants as being useful in enhancing healthcare worker's roles and responsibilities and that they were now more exposed to the unique issues faced by the LGBT community and would make an effort to use the information learnt during the training.

The organisation participated in two sessions organised by participants



from the Spanish Town Hospital and Montego Bay Type Five Clinic. A total of 30 persons including the Chief Nurse, Senior Medical Officers, head of the hospital security and the Chief Executive Officer were in attendance at the Spanish Town Hospital which focused on the role of healthcare workers towards men who have sex with men (MSM) and social factors that contribute to risk-taking among MSM. The session at Montego Bay Type Five targeted over 35 users of the facility and focused on sexuality and types of sexual intercourse and safer sexual practices.

An additional fifty healthcare workers from Montego Bay Type Five Health Centre, St Ann's Bay Health Centre, Port Maria Health Centre, May Pen Health Centre and Maxfield Park Health Centre participated in a pilot training programme for frontline workers and non-clinicians. The trainings sought to sensitize public health workers about the issues of and the rights of LGBT people and people living with HIV. Categories of frontline/non-medical healthcare workers who participated in the training programme included, Porters, Security Guards, Health Record Clerks, Customer Service Reps and Male and Female Orderly.

J-FLAG also participated in two sensitisation sessions around Reducing Stigma and Discrimination within the Healthcare Sector for South East Region in January and February. The sessions were Organised by NFPB and included 60 Healthcare providers as participants. The organisation was given the opportunity to present to the participants from the region on its work within the Healthcare sector and its contribution to a better healthcare system.

Fifteen sensitization sessions targeting service users in five healthcare facilities were conducted during the period in partnership with the National Family Planning Board, Ministry of Health (National HIV Programme and Standards and Regulation Unit) and Jamaica Network of Seropositives (JN+). A total of 394 participants were engaged/reached. The facilities and organizations worked with were: St Ann's Bay Health Centre, Port Maria Health Centre, Highgate Health Centre, Montego Bay Type Five Clinic, and May Pen Health Centre. The sessions focused on the Ministry of Health's Client Complaint Mechanism, Stigma and Discrimination towards LGBT and PLHIV, Human Rights and the Rights and Responsibilities of both Client and Users of healthcare facilities.



KEY POPULATION CHALLENGE FUND HEALTHCARE WORKERS' TRAINING

Between February and April, one member of the programme team was one of the key facilitators in a series of trainings on Stigma and Discrimination in Healthcare Facilities, hosted by Health Policy Project under the Key Population Challenge Fund. Under this project over 120 healthcare workers were trained from the Port Antonio, St. Jago Park, and Mandeville health facilities.

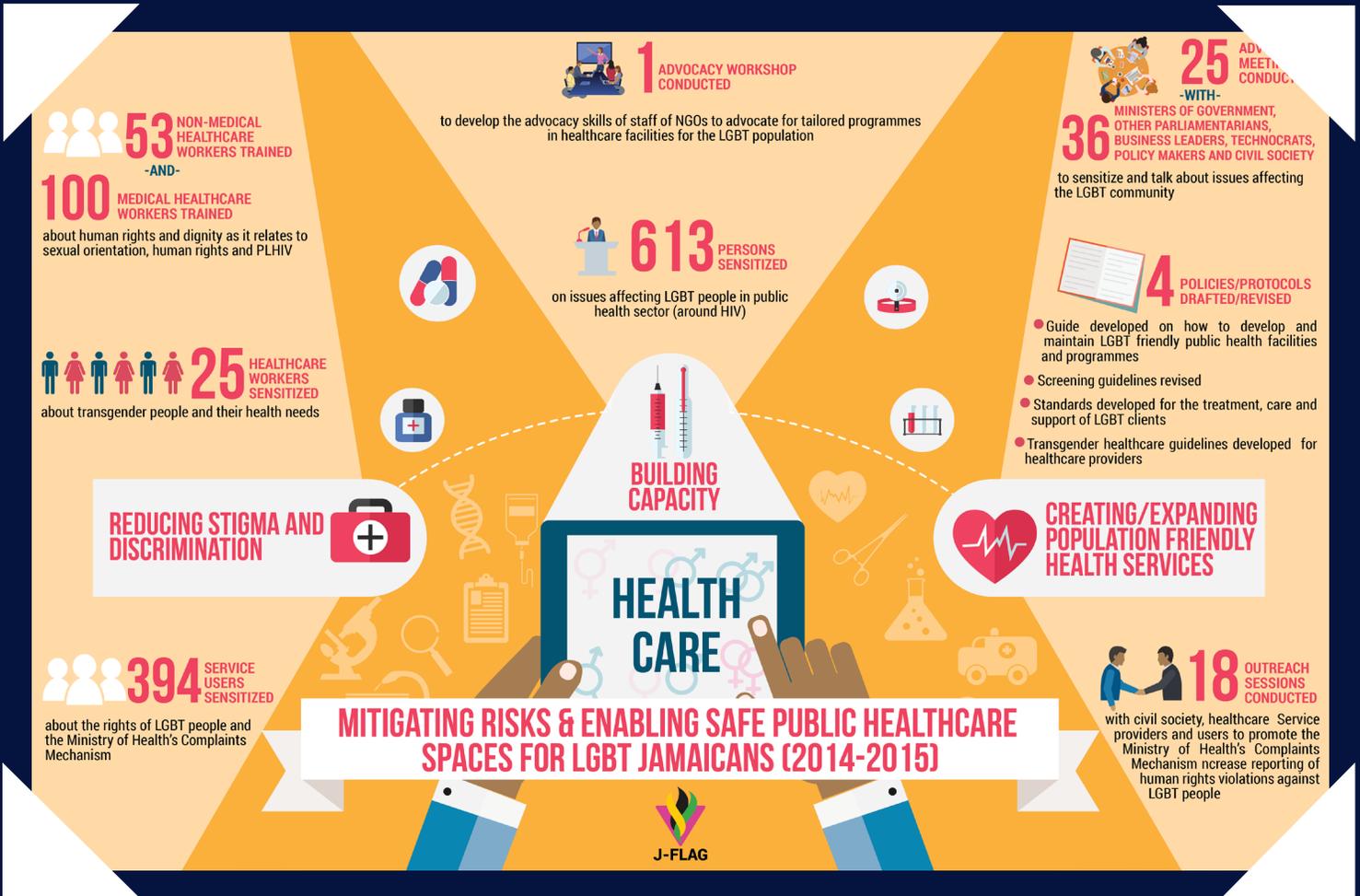




TRANSGENDER SENSITIVITY TRAINING

FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

In October, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and National Family Planning Board, 28 healthcare workers and other stakeholders which included Medical Officers, Adherence Counselors, Behaviour Change Communication Officers, Peer Educators were trained over two days in providing HIV and other health services to transgender and non-gender conforming persons. 55% of the participants had previously received training on how to deal with transgender and gender non-conforming persons on relevant health issues. However, only 15% of the participants received training on how to counsel transgender persons about anal sex and vaginal care. At the time of the training, half of the participants had never provided services to transgender persons in the past three months while 30% said they provided services to at least one and as many as five transgender persons. The remaining 20% of participants said they provided services to more than ten transgender persons over the last three months. The majority of participants who indicated that they provided service to transgender persons said they provide health/clinical and counseling services. At the end of the training, while all participants remained comfortable providing health services to TG persons, approximately 25% of the respondents were able to attribute their comfort levels to the training received.



PUBLIC FORUM - HEALTH FOR ALL:

Towards A Rights-based Approach to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support



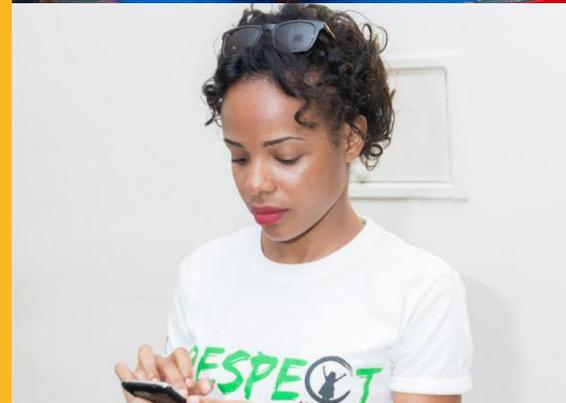
On March 4, 2015, J-FLAG in partnership with the National Family Planning Board, Jamaica Network for Seropositives (JN+), Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC), National HIV Programme and United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) hosted a high-level forum entitled, Health for All: Towards a Rights-based Approach to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support.

The human rights and HIV forum objective was to point to the critical role of rights-based approaches to health and development in the HIV response in Jamaica, particularly for people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key populations that are most affected by HIV. The idea for this initiative is to ensure that every Jamaican, in every nook and cranny, from Negril point to Morant point, needs and is entitled to have access to essential health care and this requires a provision of the necessary services, which includes appropriate training of persons, equipping health services; and ensuring information, tools and commodities that safeguard our health are accessible to all Jamaicans.

The forum was attended by over 300 participants from Civil Society, Academia and Government. The keynote speaker was Ambassador Deborah Birx, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator & U.S. Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy. Other representatives at the forum included US Ambassador to Jamaica Luis G. Moreno, Her Worship the Mayor of Kingston & St Andrew, Senator Councillor Angela Brown Burke, MP Raymond Pryce, Councillors Kari Douglas and Veneisha Phillips, Dr. Ernest Massiah, Director of the UNAIDS Regional Support Team for the Caribbean, and a number of other diplomats, and government officials.

An important feature of the forum was the social media activation. A total of 161 people were connected to the event via livestream. The event hashtag - #Health4AllJA - also did very well. There were over 800 posts with the #health4allja hashtag on Twitter and Facebook generated by 74 persons. The Twitter posts reached 60,460 people (See below for more detailed analysis).

The evaluation survey revealed that half of the respondents indicated that they attended the Health for All Forum for professional growth/development and the content of the forum. The participants indicated that their objectives were met, with 63.46% agreeing that the forum fulfilled their reasons for attending. 96% agreed that the forum was informative and useful, 80.39% said the forum addressed important issues that affect their work and studies and 73.08% said the forum provided them with opportunities to network with other professionals. Eighty four point six two percent (84.62%) of the respondents agreed, that they would recommend the forum to others.

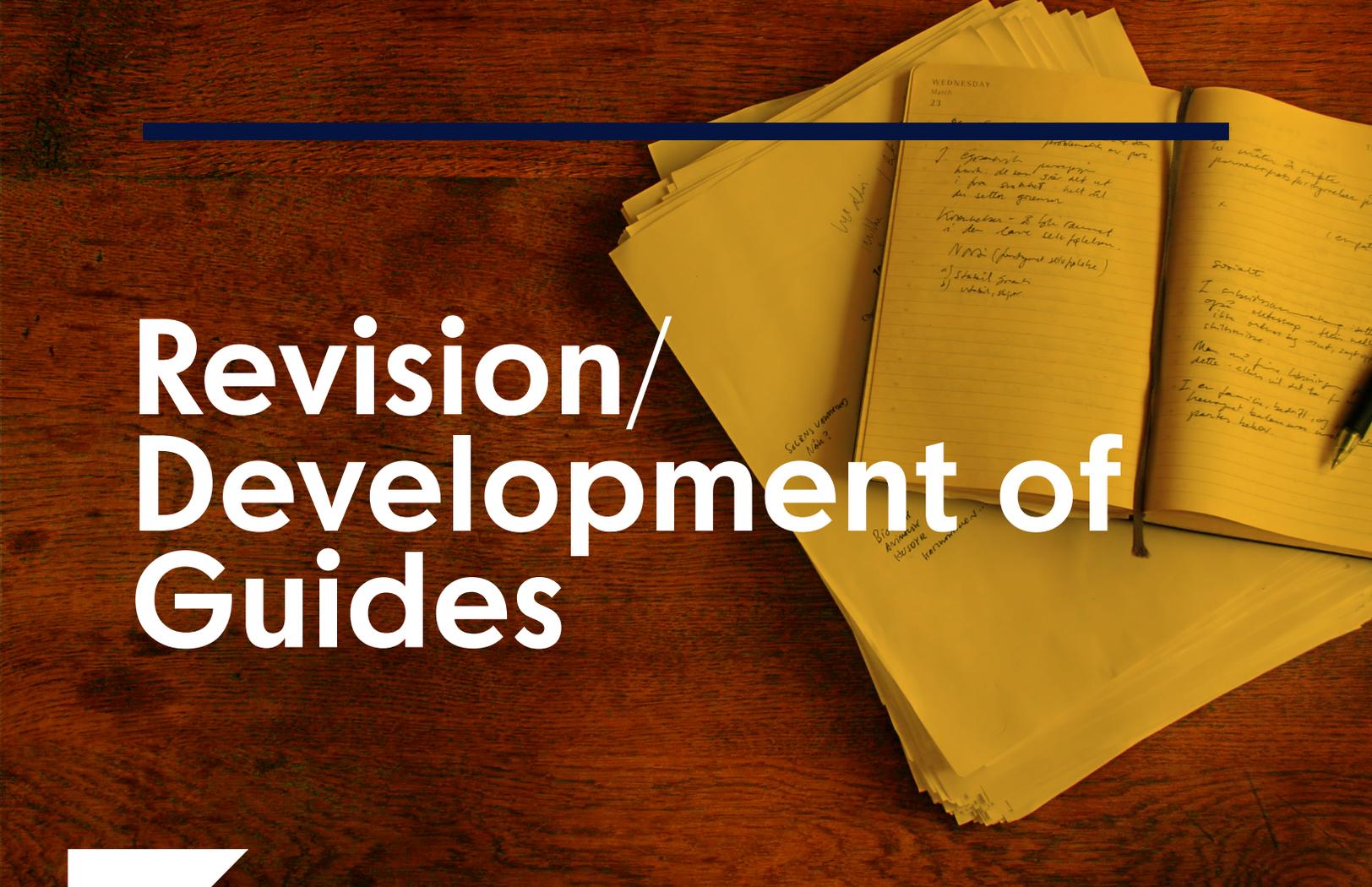




Event photos can be viewed [here](#)

Event videos: [VIDEO 1](#) | [VIDEO 2](#)





Revision/ Development of Guides

1. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

A Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for healthcare workers regarding the treatment, care and support for LGBT clients was developed under the Mitigating Risks Project by hired consultant Dr. Geoffrey Barrow. The SOP is guided by the following four principles: (1) The elimination of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; (2) The promotion and provision of full and equal access to services; (3) The elimination of stigmatization of LGBT people and their families; and (4) The creation and strengthening of a health service environment where it is safe for people to disclose sexuality to their providers.

Although the SOP is primarily a resource for healthcare professionals, the SOP may also be used by LGBT clients, their families, and non-governmental organisations to understand how they can contribute to the delivery of quality services to LGBT population in public health facilities.

2. CLINICAL HIV MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

A revision of the MOH Clinical HIV Management Guidelines was done to ensure that guidelines specific to the medical screening of gay, bisexual and other MSM were clearly outlined/included. The ARV and testing guidelines within the document also included updated information from the 2013 WHO guidelines adapted to the Jamaican context. The updated Guideline included a standard package of care for all PLHIV, an enhanced package of care for the vulnerable populations, linkage to protocols for return to care, missed appointments and linkage to care were included. A user-friendly pull out guide of the larger document was also created to give Healthcare workers easier access and reference to this information.

3. STANDARD OF CARE GUIDELINE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

A standard of care guideline for healthcare workers regarding the treatment of transgender and gender non-conforming persons was completed by consultant Ms. Audrey brown. The document looks at the medical and non-medical treatment and care of transgender persons and guiding principles for the treatment of gender non-conforming persons. The guide seeks to address and promote the highest standards of health care for transgender treatment, care and support of transgender persons. It also provide clinical guidance for healthcare providers to assist transgender people with accessing safe and effective healthcare opportunities to achieving lasting personal comfort with their gendered selves, in order to improve their overall health, psychological well-being, and self-fulfillment.

4. GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY - A PERSONAL GUIDE

A palm-sized guide was developed that featured 10 LGBT persons and allies who shared personal descriptions of their gender and sexual identities. The guide included an image of each person, accompanied by a short descriptive paragraph and a self mapping on the four key gender and sexuality continua - biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. A glossary of important terms related to gender and sexual diversity was also included in the guide.



PARENTS' SUPPORT GROUP

In 2015, J-FLAG continued to engage family members of LGBT persons in an effort to reduce homophobia within families and communities and provide assistance to parents who may need support. Eight parents actively participated in the support group throughout the year and some participated in meetings outside of the support group, including with donors, parliamentarians, technocrats and business leaders. Parents were engaged in discussions around a wide range of issues such as accepting and providing a supportive environment for your child who is LGBT, understanding LGBT issues and maintaining a positive which aimed improving conditions at home and in the community.

In November, the organisation hosted a Retreat for Parents and their LGBT Children under the theme Supporting Your LGBT Family Member engender greater compassion, understanding, and acceptance among parents towards their LGBT children and other family members. Twenty-one persons from Kingston, St. Andrew and St. Thomas participated in the two-day retreat.

TESTIMONIAL

In March 2013, my mother called me crying after she heard from my cousin that I am gay. My relationship with my mother and my entire life changed that day. I was prepared to be completely cut-off from my family and support myself through any means necessary. I conveyed this to my outraged mother on the phone, and hung up afterwards. Minutes later, she called back and expressed her love and acceptance for me. She said she almost died giving birth to me she was just afraid of me being hurt or mistreated.

Since then our relationship has improved. A part of the reason our relationship improved was the J-FLAG Parents' Support Group. Through this group, I was able to tell her that I actually consider myself a (trans)woman, and was able to explain to her what that means. She is now trying to understand me as I am, which I truly appreciate; she sees and loves me for who I am and I love her more than anything. I am forever grateful to J-FLAG for the support group because they helped to bring us even closer together.

Donique Green

SUMMARY OF INCIDENTS REPORTED

In 2015, a total of 52 incidents were reported to J-FLAG by 47 persons. The data collected between January and December show the majority of incidents occurred in Kingston & St Andrew (33) and St Catherine (11). Individuals between ages 15 and 34, particularly males in urban areas were most likely to report they have experienced discrimination, harassment, violence and other forms of abuses to J-FLAG. Less than a third of the reports received by J-FLAG were reported to the police.

NATURE OF INCIDENT	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS	AGE RANGE			GENDER			REPORTED TO POLICE
		15-24	25-34	35-49	M	F	TRANS	
Physical Assault/Attack	21	8	13	0	20	1	0	6
Employment Discrimination	4	3	0	1	3	1	0	0
Blackmail/Extortion	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	1
Expulsion from home	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Home Invasion	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Mob Attack	4	1	3	0	2	1	1	2
Theft/Robbery/Burglary	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Threats/Intimidation	14	7	6	1	13	1	0	5
Verbal Assault/Attack	3	2	1	0	0	2	1	0
TOTAL	52	23	26	3	43	7	2	15

** Two of the females reported were assigned the male sex at birth but object to being included in category for transgender persons.

POLICY INITIATIVES AND ADVOCACY



22ND SESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF JAMAICA

Between April 6 and 10, 2015, J-FLAG was a member of a coalition of Human Rights Defenders from Jamaicans for Justice, Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition and Layola Law School International Human Rights Clinic in Geneva lobbying states to make recommendations and advanced questions to Jamaica in its 22nd Session of the Universal Periodic Review on issues related to HIV, migration, homophobic discrimination and violence, children's rights, prison conditions, extrajudicial and summary killings and displacement and homelessness among LGBT people.

J-FLAG's participation was supported by ILGA - the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. The UPR is a significant innovation of the Human Rights Council which is based on equal treatment for all countries. It provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to

improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights. The UPR also includes a sharing of best human rights practices around the globe. Currently, no other mechanism of this kind exists' (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights).

During the visit, meetings were held with representatives from the Permanent Missions of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Slovenia, Haiti, Norway, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay European Union, and Hungary, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Missions were generally very open to the suggestions regarding recommendations to proffer and questions to ask. Following the meetings, the recommendations were modified and advance questions drafted and sent to all Missions. Where sexual orientation and gender identity issues are concerned these recommendations were made to Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Hungary, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Uruguay.

LGBT LOBBYING MEETINGS/COURTESY CALLS

In May 2015, to observe the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), J-FLAG organised twelve advocacy meetings with twenty-three Ministers of Government, other Parliamentarians, business leaders, and technocrats and twenty LGBT Jamaicans and allies to talk about issues affecting the community.

These meetings provided policy and decision-makers with an opportunity to dialogue with LGBT Jamaicans about laws and policies as well as socio-cultural issues affecting them, their daily experiences, and their concerns and ideas about national development. This is important to encourage political will which is desperately needed to address the challenges vulnerable and marginalized communities face as we seek to make 'Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.'

All persons met with support the human rights of LGBT people and made commitments to improve their human rights.

YOUTH POLICY GREEN PAPER

On May 29, J-FLAG organized a consultation was done with 10 young persons from the LGBT persons and allies to review the National Youth Policy Green Paper. This was done to prepare and present the organisation's comments and recommendations on the Green Paper to the Ministry of Youth. A number of recommendations were made to improve the policy and include broader and more specific focus on the rights of young people in Jamaica who are LGBT. J-FLAG also facilitated the participation of LGBT youth to attend technical consultations which were organized by the Ministry of Youth in Mandeville and Kingston.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE

J-FLAG, in partnership with Jamaicans for Justice, organized three sensitization and strategy sessions around the possible establishment of a Jamaican National Human Rights Institute (NHRI) as per the Paris Principles. A wide range of human rights defenders from a number of key human rights and related organizations participated in these meetings.

In September, the organisation paper entitled National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and the Human Rights Situation of LGBT People in Jamaica which discusses the Paris Principles and outlined the operational framework, roles and responsibilities of NHRIs. The paper also sought to make a determination as to whether there are any current spaces in which such an institution can be regarded as existing within the Jamaican context. It also set out the situation of human rights abuses faced by the LGBT community and the legal framework within which these abuses are committed, often times with impunity and provided an analysis of the possible formation of a Jamaican NHRI and how that will address the concerns of the LGBT community, with a view to making useful recommendations concerning the establishment of this body within our legal framework.

The paper can be accessed [here](#):

XLV REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE OAS

In June, the organisation participated in the Organisation of American States General Assembly with human defenders as a part of the LGBTTTI Coalition. During the period meetings were held with representatives from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Mayer Brown LLP and Freedom House.

IDAHOT 2015 COCKTAIL RECEPTION

This year, we culminated our observation of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) with a cocktail hosted by the Ambassador of the United States of America, Luis G Moreno and Mrs. Gloria Moreno with special guests, Randy Berry, Special Envoy, Human Rights of LGBT People and Todd Larson, LGBT Director, USAID.



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