Disability, Aging, And Development In Jamaica

Kingston, Runaway Bay, Mandeville

Jamaica

Together, we will:

- **See what local grassroots associations are doing** to promote the human rights and development of persons with disabilities and older persons in Jamaica.
- **Discuss** Jamaica's disability law and policy with Senator Floyd Morris, Jamaica's first blind member of Parliament.
- **Volunteer** with adolescents with psychosocial disabilities at the Kingston YMCA and children with intellectual disabilities at the Early Intervention Center.
- **Compare** accessibility, inclusion, and rehabilitation in urban and rural communities.
- **Understand** what the National Council of Senior Citizens and Jamaican Council for Disabled Persons do to protect some of Jamaica's most marginalized population.
- **Roast coffee** with Deaf Can, a group of young entrepreneurs with hearing impairments.
- **Live for a week** at the Jamaica Deaf Village, where the primary language is sign language.
- **Visit** the farms of disabled farmers and learn how they work together to make ends meet.
- **Assess** if the island's tourism industry benefits Jamaica's seniors and disabled persons.
- **Find out** what it means to be part of the Windrush Generation, Jamaicans who immigrated to the UK to rebuild the country after WWII and are now being “returned home” after decades living abroad.
- **Tour** Treasure Beach, a coastal village that is preparing for the next hurricane by developing plans to make sure that older persons and persons with disabilities can evacuate to accessible shelters.
- **Learn** what UN Agencies, USAID, and others are doing to include older persons and persons with disabilities in their projects and programs.
- **Talk** to retired veterans at the Caribbean's only Old Soldiers Home.
- **Cook** healthy, traditional foods with seniors at Jamaica's only rural diabetes clinic.
- **Learn** what the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the planned UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons means on the ground.
Did you know?

- Persons with disabilities in developing countries account for **1 in 5** of all people living on less than **$1 a day**.
- Older persons are also **disproportionately poor, with one third** in developing countries living in extreme poverty.
- Yet, **just 1 % of all foreign aid** reaches disabled persons and older persons.

Jamaica was the **first country** to:

- Sign the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (2007)
- Develop a **National Policy for Senior Citizens** (1997) in the Caribbean.

Demographics and Development:

Jamaica is one of the **fastest aging** countries in the world

- Today **12%** of the Jamaican population are over sixty, but by 2050 **a full 25%** of the population will be, the same level Japan is experiencing today.
- This is because fertility rates have been **cut in half** in just a generation and a half while **life expectancy has increased** by more than a decade.

The number of Jamaicans with disabilities is **on the rise**.

- Right now, an estimated **15% of the population** are persons with disabilities, but that number is likely to increase.
- This is because developing countries like Jamaica experience the **“double burden of disease,”** where traditional chronic illnesses persist at the same time new ones that are associated with development, such as diabetes, emerge.

Local Hosts:

- Intergenerational Caribbean, a grassroots older persons advocacy association
- Combined Disability Association, a national advocacy network of disabled persons

Accommodations:

- University of West Indies Main Campus, Kingston (10 days)
- Discovery Bay Marine Research Lab, Runaway Bay (1 week)
- Jamaica Deaf Village, Mandeville (1 week)

Instructors:

- Stephen Meyers, Assistant Professor in LSJ, JSIS & Disability Studies
- Megan McCloskey, PhD Candidate in Law

**When:** Typically Early Fall Start (August/September)

**Cost:** $4,650 [includes lodging, field trips and some meals]

**Information Sessions:**

Typically December and January

Program Status: Active