

JAMAICA

Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO

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HIGHLIGHT OF ACTIVITIES IN 2020 IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

The Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO (JNC-UNESCO) was also impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We adjusted to the work from home policy adopted by the Government of Jamaica and the subsequent protocols. Operational activities were shifted to virtual platforms to maintain contact locally, regionally and internationally. We collaborated with the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO on "UNESCO Open Science & Decolonization of Knowledge, Caribbean region" (15 October), with several partners (National Library of Jamaica, Ministry of Education, Planning Institute of Jamaica, Library Association of Jamaica) for "Dialogue for Change" and a World Day for Audiovisual Heritage activity (Caribbean), as well as with JFUCCA (Clubs for UNESCO) for the International Youth Leadership Conference held in November, Jamaica's Youth Month. We

continued our ongoing relationship with the Maroon Community through the Community Radio Abeng 88.7 in Accompong.

Our most impressive activity was the successful hosting of the 15th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) chaired by JNC-UNESCO's Chairperson, Hon Olivia Grange. It was the first time that this meeting was being held virtually and from Jamaica. In this activity we partnered with the UNESCO Secretariat, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean and our parent ministry. This meeting facilitated the input of 140 countries and 800 participants.



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OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES LED IN 2020

We continued our engagement bilaterally and regionally. We participated in the Consultative Meeting for the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget 2022-2025 (41 C/5) and our Secretary-General was elected as one of the vice-chairs. We also participated in the GRULAC meeting (17 September), the 11th session of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (14-15 September), the 8th session of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Bureau meeting (8-10 September), the 11th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All program (23-24 September) and LAC Online Training for the Periodic Reporting of the 2003 Convention.

JNC-UNESCO Secretary-General was invited and conducted a 3-day sensitization workshop for new members of the Curacao National Commission. We hosted the regional workshop on the "Fight against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property in the Caribbean" and presented at the UNESCO Caribbean Virtual Dialogue "Rethinking the Media Landscape in Caribbean Small Island Developing States post-COVID-19" as well as at the Mental Health panel of the ICS World Youth Day "Health, Education and Economic Empowerment" webinar (12 August). Through funds received under the Participation Programme, JNC-UNESCO in collaboration with the Ministry of Education hosted the micro-science sensitization for St Catherine (20 February

2020) enabling the sharing and capacity building for the development of science education. The National Bioethics Committee of Jamaica hosted an online conference "Ethical issues in health care" (18 June) and in collaboration with University of the West Indies, Mona, had an online conversation "Ethical issues in the management of COVID-19" (23 August). JNC-UNESCO actively supported Jamaica's submission «Revivalism, a religious practice in Jamaica» to UNESCO for inscription on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Our continued engagement with the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean was significant especially as forty Jamaican teachers benefitted from the online/blended learning initiative and blackboard academy. We participated in webinars/seminars organized and hosted by them such as: UNESCO Talk: Spotlight on Gender Equality & Artificial Intelligence (1 December), Artificial Intelligence for Information Accessibility AI4IA Conference (28 September), International Day for Universal Access to Information – A Caribbean Perspective in partnership with the Media Institute of the Caribbean (28 September), "How Open Science can be promoted in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean" (21 September), Media & Information Literacy (MIL) Caribbean Consultation (30 July), Webinar #6 for the Caribbean: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in times of COVID-19 (29 July).

FUTURE PRIORITIES

There will be a special youth project (TALK UP YOUTH) funded by the Participation Programme. This project is designed to give youth a voice in response to problems and dislocation brought about due to COVID-19. The project will address a number of issues in order to develop a survival kit. Some of the areas to be addressed: mental health, online skills, infrastructural challenges with technology, where to get help, how to benefit from creative skills. This kit will be shared on different media platforms. Information will be generated through radio broadcast and community involvement.

Another project "Capacity Building in Climate Change Resilience" will address the increase of knowledge and awareness about climate change to build the resilience of vulnerable community members through training in environmentally sustainable livelihoods (diversifying income stream). The training sessions will also address issues of COVID-19.

Furthermore we will continue to engage with our Caribbean and international partners in areas that are mutually beneficial.