



# The Peace Garden

*Journey to Harmony - Light the Passion, Share the Dream  
(Beijing 2008 Olympics)*

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## VPA APPLAUDS APPROVAL OF ACTION PLAN FOR RESPONSE TO CHILDREN

The Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) commended the move by government to approve the National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence (NPACV). The approval came from Cabinet and was recently tabled in the House of Representative. Elizabeth Ward, chair of the VPA and country coordinator of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children Initiative, of which Jamaica is a part, expressed satisfaction that the NPACV was given the nod by the Cabinet.

“The work done by the various committees is to be applauded. We are pleased that the government has seen the urgency



Cover of Action Plan

in moving this policy document forward,” she said. The VPA chair said that the goal of the document was to create and maintain a protective environment, supportive and responsive to the issues of children and violence. She informed that the action plan identified five outcome goals which included strengthening the policy, legal and regulatory framework to ensure the protection of children from all forms of violence and exploitation. This is, in addition to, improving the quality of access to services for children affected by violence. Input on the document came

from wide stakeholder collaborations, which included government ministries, departments and agencies; civil society groups such as the VPA; private sector, the Jamaican Diaspora, international development partners and communities. “The completion of this Plan will provide a road map for the country to protect the nation’s children. It will also open doors for us to apply for international funding to execute critical programmes that will benefit our children,” she said. The completion of the NPACV fulfills Jamaica’s commitment to the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

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### VPA SALUTES JFJ!



The VPA congratulates Jamaicans for Justice on its 20th anniversary. The JFJ is a non-governmental human rights and social justice entity.

## HUNDREDS BENEFIT FROM CHILD INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

Some 220 students who participated in the Child Resiliency Programme, an intervention initiative of the VPA graduated from the programme during the quarter.

Dr Kim Scott, director of the Child Resiliency

Programme said the children increased both their literacy levels (including computer literacy) and love for learning, particularly reading.

“They are demonstrating better impulse control, increased confidence and self-esteem, an increased sense of belonging, an ability to get along better with their parents, better general attitudes and manners, the ability to identify someone who cares and less conflict, aggression and fights at home and school,” she said proudly of the cohort.

The graduates were from the Hugh Sherlock Centre, Boys Town and Young Men Christian Association in Kingston; Sam Sharpe Teachers College in Montego Bay and Falmouth All Age School in Trelawny where the programme is offered.

Meanwhile, she said the parents of these children also benefitted from the programme are beginning to demonstrate increased strategies for conflict resolution and more involvement in the child’s life at school.



Participants in the Child Resiliency Programme display their certificates.

“There is an increased ability to find alternate discipline strategies apart from beating, and

they are better able to set clear rules and boundaries for their child,” she added.

The programme has five arms to the intervention. These include: nutritional support where the children got a

cooked meal each afternoon; aca-

ademic support; life skills training; parenting and family support and teacher training.

## NGO INSPIRES YOUNG PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED IN PEACE BUILDING

The non-governmental organization, Youth Inspiring Positive Change JA Limited has been engaging young people as effective agents of change in the peace building process through a **Youth for Peace JA National Campaign**. Neville Charlton, founder and chairman of the organisation said that the initiative which commenced in December 2018 involved encouraging young people to participate in the peace building process at the community, national and international levels.

The initiative is a youth-centred national campaign to counter violence in Jamaica and build culture of respect, understanding of peace. The Campaign

includes workshops and tours with stakeholders such as: youth clubs, high schools, colleges, universities and



Participants in the programme striking a pose.

youths in communities to discuss peace building mechanisms that can be employed at the individual and national levels. “You have to ensure that young people are not just seen as the problem, but as the solution,” he said pointing out that the initiative is being driven by young people.

## EFFECTIVE PARENTING CAN STEM VIOLENCE - SAYS VPA

Parents and caregivers play an important role in a child's development and can help prevent the perpetration of violence in schools says Colleen Wint-Bond, project coordinator at the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA). Wint-Bond, who addressed the Jamaica Island Nutrition Network Conference on Nutrition and Parenting at the Mico University in April, said that data showed that children experience violence across all ages of childhood, noting that it is usually first experienced in the home. "The research has shown that parent involvement



Mrs. Colleen Wint Bond addressing the attendees.

is critical to children's school success. This success depends on a healthy, developed brain, and this requires a good, nurturing relationship with a primary caregiver," she said. The VPA project coordinator however pointed out that many parents faced institutional and personal challenges themselves and this could contribute to a child experiencing and/or perpetrating violence in school.

"How parents were raised can affect how they raise their own children and how children deal with conflict and violence in school," she said. Parents could look to their own upbringing, she said, and consider their experience and/or exposure to nurturance; levels of experience of/exposure to abuse, violence; level of education and literacy. Other factors to consider include their communication, expression, their language of negotiation and conflict resolution skills, the age they were when they had their first child; the amount of family and social supports; and certainly their levels of stress, anger and fear.

## VPA LAUNCHES INSPIRE STRATEGY CAMPAIGN IN SCHOOLS

The Violence Prevention Alliance launched an INSPIRE Strategy Campaign in 12 schools across the island. Elizabeth Ward, chair of the VPA said that Campaign specifically targeted schools that emerged parish champions in its **2018 Trees for Peace Competition**. "These schools were asked to create a campaign on the INSPIRE Strategy, which is aimed at ending violence against children," she said. Dr. Ward explained that the INSPIRE Strategy, which is an initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO), identifies a select



Workshop at St. James parish winners Alcar Academy.

group of strategies that have shown success in reducing violence against children. "These strategies include the implementation and enforcement of laws; norms and values; safe environments; parent and caregiver support; income and economic strengthening; response and support services.

The VPA worked with selected schools through targeted workshops that guided them in the development of their respective campaigns. The workshops were conducted in the parishes of St. Mary, St. Catherine, St. James and Manchester in May. Following this, the four best campaigns will be selected and promoted.



Students at Alcar Academy.

## “TRACKS ON STREETS” MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN ALLMAN TOWN

Inspired to be the change in his community, Kevaughn Ellis started a charity in his community of Allman Town, an inner-city community situated in Kingston.

The youth-led charity called the Inner-city Development Youth Association (IDYA), hosts several activities geared towards community cohesion in and around Allman Town.

One of the initiatives that have been implemented is the ‘Track on Streets’.



Winners of the Quiz Competition.

This is a back-to-school sports day, which is held on a main street in Allman Town, where all children who participate are given back-to-school materials and scholarship opportunities. Now in its sixth staging, Kevaughn said that it has become a staple event in the community attracting the support of community members and businesses in the community. “Our mantra is *“road block without a load glock”*, so every year we block the road and the children compete,” he



Participants in ‘Track on Street’.

shared with committee members of the VPA in June. He said the event included potato and math races. He further added, that the event was becoming increasingly popular as persons from as far as Manchester attended the event to compete. The last staging of the event attracted as much as 200 patrons. This year’s staging is set for **August 24, 2019**.

The Association also has another major initiative, which is an inner-city quiz competition where children from Allman Town compete with other children from nearby communities such as: Denham Town, Tivoli Gardens and Trench Town. Kevaughn said the quiz competition has had a positive effect on the participants, who are usually grade six students sitting the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT), now the Primary Exit Profile (PEP) examinations. These students usually passed for traditional high schools such as: St. Georges

Wolmers Girls, Holy Childhood High School and Excelsior High School.

“The programme really helps because they start to study long before GSAT and what we do is, give them questions that they are likely to get in GSAT. This has helped in their preparations for the exams,” he said.

The Association is made up 16 young persons and is supported through dues from the members. Meanwhile, the initiatives are financially supported by young people from the community and local businesses.

## VPA LAUNCHES VPA NORTH-EAST CHAPTER



The Violence Prevention Alliance launched its North East Region Chapter in April. The aim of the NE chapter is to bring together key stakeholders from St. Ann and engage in solutions driven discussions around evidence based public health and multi-sectorial approaches to violence prevention.