



Staff at Victims Support Unit completed 2 day Training in Preparing Children for Court

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Children's Advocate, Mary Clarke (left), consults with Senior Co-ordinator, Victim Support Unit in the Ministry of Justice, Osbourne Bailey, at the opening of the Children in Court training course . Photo JIS

Some 30 counsellors and volunteers attached to the Victim Support Unit (VSU) islandwide are now better equipped to assist child victims and witnesses who have to appear before the courts as a result of their participation in a two day training workshop.

The workshop, which was held at the Knutsford Court Hotel from September 8th to 9th, formed part of the Children in Court Programme being spearheaded by the Office of the Children's Advocate (OCA) in partnership with the VSU with support from the CUSO/VSO, a

Canadian non-profit development agency.

Speaking at the opening session, Mr. Osbourne Bailey, Senior Coordinator at the VSU explained that the workshop was designed to increase the capacity of the participants to "not coach, but prepare children for court," noting that "many children who are abused are unable to function properly in court because they are unprepared."

This lack of preparation and familiarity with the court procedures, Children's Advocate, Mrs. Mary Clarke, said was a cause for concern. - continue on pg 2

Children’s Advocate addresses UNHCHR Expert Consultation

Children’s Advocate, Mrs. Mary Clarke was among a group of some 20 experts including government representatives, ombudsman for children and representatives of National Human Rights Institutions, United Nations bodies and civil society who participated in a consultation on “Child –sensitive counseling, complaint and reporting mechanism” in Geneva, Switzerland on September 30 and October 1,2010 .

The expert consultation, which was organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children , sought to examine various models of accessible and child friendly counseling, complaint and reporting mechanisms established by various governments and independent institutions as

well as civil society organizations.

The consultation also covered challenges and best practices in the use of such mechanisms by children and their representatives. Recommendations on how to develop and strengthen effective child –friendly violence counseling, referral and reporting mechanisms which respects the rights of children were also put forward.

According to Mrs. Clarke, the opportunity to share what Jamaica is doing with experts from around the world was welcomed. “It was also pleasing to know that Jamaica was able to contribute to the report requested by the Human Rights Council,” she further explained.

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Mrs. Clarke, who brought greetings on behalf of the OCA, stated that she had received reports where cases involving children breakdown in the Justice System because the children were unable to handle the court processes.

Based on these reports, she explained, the OCA conducted a research into the "Experiences of Children in State Care Who Appeared before the Court" to hear directly from the children how they were treated when they were brought before the courts.

A recommendation that came out of the study was to implement an initiative modeled after the Canadian "Kids In Court Programme" to prepare children for court proceedings.

Over the two days, the participants were exposed to various best practices in the areas of ethics in court room settings, tools to help children through the court systems and methods to assist children and their parents or guardians to cope with court system and the outcome of the trial. There was also a field visit to the Half Way Tree Court House.

NOTICE BOARD

- ✓ **National Parent Month**
November
- ✓ **World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse**
November 19th
- ✓ **Universal Children’s Day**
November 20th
- ✓ **World AIDS Day**
December 1st
- ✓ **International Day for Persons with Disabilities**
December 3rd

OCA among presenters at 18th ISPCAN Congress

The Office of the Children's Advocate was among the group of presenters at the 18th Congress of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) in Honolulu, Hawaii.

This year's congress which was held under the theme: *"One World, One Family, Many Cultures: Strengthening Children and Families Affected by Personal, Intra-Familial and Global Conflict"*, took place from September 25 to 29.

The OCA's presentation entitled **Foster Care: A Viable Alternative to Institutionalization** came out of a study of the Foster Care System in Jamaica that was commissioned by the Office in 2009. The study aimed to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the foster care programme in Jamaica and to assess the treatment of children in foster care in order to provide policy directions for the enhancement of the programme.

Over 600 participants representing some 40 countries took part in this year's congress.

The representatives from the OCA who participated in the congress were sponsored by the European Union Delegation in Jamaica.

35 Children From West Kingston attended Summer Camp

Following the West Kingston incursion in May, the OCA sought to provide psychosocial support for some of the children from the affected communities.

The OCA received sponsorship from the Citizen, Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) for 35 children to attend residential summer camps. Partnerships were formed with existing camps to accommo-

OCA, JEF & MOE participate in Child Labour Elimination Workshop

Three representatives from Jamaica, drawn from the Office of the Children's Advocate, the Ministry of Education and the Jamaica Employers' Federation recently completed a five day training workshop on "Education for All and Child Labour Elimination" at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy.

The workshop focused on child labour as a barrier to 'Education for All (EFA)' and the policy and programme approaches that can remove barriers to education for child labourers.

Participation in the workshop was made possible by the ILO's Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour in Jamaica - TACKLE Project.

Other countries that were represented include: Mali, Cape Verde, Zambia, Uganda, Guinea Bissau, Serra Leone, India, Benin, Fiji, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal and Sudan.

date these children. Approximately 15 children went to the African Methodist Episcopal Summer Camp and 20 to the Inter Schools Christian Fellowship Summer Camp. The following are excerpts from letters written by the children:

"During the past week I have learn to cooperate with others. This camp was just what I needed. Throughout the past week ...I have learned the basic essentials of life such as forgiveness but most of all I learn the how to cooperate with my peers...once cooperating with others was difficult for me but not anymore."

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TALKING POINT:**Child Labour****“Some words should NEVER go together”*****Facts on Child Labour***

- ✓ Child labour can be defined as all economic activity by children excluding the types of work permitted by the ILO Convention 138
- ✓ Hazardous child labour includes work which by its nature or circumstances may jeopardize the child's safety, health (physical and mental) and moral development.
- ✓ No person should employ a child who is under the age of 13 years old to perform any work. (CCPA, 2004)
- ✓ “No person shall employ a child who has attained the age of 13 years, but who has not attained the age of 15 years, in the performance of any work other than occupation included on the list of prescribed occupations...” (CCPA, 2004)

- ✓ The main groups/forms of child labour existing in Jamaica include:
 - Street children (including market vendors)*
 - Commercial agricultural labourers*
 - Domestic helpers (household and subsistence agricultural)*
 - Urban formal sector workers*
 - Sexually exploited children*

- ✓ The main causes of child labour in Jamaica include:

<i>Urban and rural poverty</i>	<i>75%</i>
<i>Neglect and Domestic Abuse</i>	<i>18%</i>
<i>State of educational/child care facilities</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Peer pressure</i>	<i>2%</i>

Source: Assessment of Implementation and Enforcement Machinery to Combat Child Labour in Jamaica Draft Report, February 2010

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"This letter was written to show my appreciation for you sponsoring the West Kingston children so that we could be apart of camp 2010...You actually made us feel like we are loved by people who cares about us... The camp theme was 'Hope for Tomorrow' and now I know that despite what has happen to us and what we have experience in the past, there is always hope. Hope for becoming something amazing in life, hope for a better lifestyle and most of all hope for freedom...God can and will set us free from all problems." - age 16

"I just want to tell you thanks for the lovely

week I spend at summer camp. I got to learn about a lot of things...I learn to make candle and how we can live without technology." -age 11

"it was a pleasure being on that camping trip. I appreciate you all for letting me learn so much about the bible ... Everything I learn I am trying to keep in me for life" age 10

"This was a tremendous experience for me, I have learned a lot of things...I like everything about this trip, it was very nice, I felt like I was at home. I lost my two brothers but I feel comforted ...in the bible you can get comfort to carry on." -age 14