



The past five years have been challenging but very rewarding years. NODM accomplished a great deal. But before speaking about our challenges, rewards and accomplishments, allow

me to share a bit of NODM history with you, and also introduce you to our abiding objectives which guides what we do.

NODM arose a result of a series of "Rights and Awareness/Action Workshops", undertaken under the leadership of professor Bernard Headley, by way of a grant from the European Union, aimed at assisting Involuntary Returned Migrants and their families with issues of resettling in Jamaica.

During this research workshops, several challenges faced by IRM's and their loved ones were identified by the research team. These challenges, included income generation, housing and securing identification. Participants with the help of Professor Headley, and a core of supporters/advisors, took the initiative to organize IRM population into an entity that could directly expose and address the challenges.

In July of 2010, at a formation meeting, held on the UWI campus, with a large majority of the participants calling for the formation of an organization of their own chosen, Professor Headley, a result of his familiarity with the issues, was impressed upon to assist in the formation. A secretariat was elected.

In early October 2010, the Migration Project Office of the British High Commission provided grant funding to NODM, still in its formation stage, for an inaugural meeting (NODM Launch), organizational set-up costs and capacity building, to include exploring the building of a NODM Web page

On Sunday, 24 October 2010, NODM was formally launched at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, an event that was well attended by IRM's from across the island, representatives from the British High Commission, Jamaica's Ministry of National Security, and well-respected members of the Jamaican society at large. Registration of NODM followed.

Thereafter, by way of grant funding, a 6-month pilot project, focused on setting up and managing a Helpline for IRM's, was undertaken. This was followed by a Support Services Project, now in its sixth year of operation (April 2012-present).

NODM was incorporated under the laws of Jamaica on the 26 day of May 2011, with the stated objectives to:

1. To foster and develop among deported migrants understanding of their fundamental rights in the Jamaican state and society.
2. To make representations to key state and civic agencies on ALL matters pertaining to the rights, status and treatment of deported persons.
3. To plan and implement ways, means and projects that will lead to the social-economic uplift and empowerment of deported Jamaicans.
4. Nurture alliances with agencies and NGO's that advocate for and provide services to deported migrants.

Our ongoing activities consist of reception, relocation, transportation, re-documentation (birth certificates, trn's, various licenses); referrals to emergency accommodation; custom

(retrieving personal effects from overseas); follow-up reintegration support (by way of regional coordinators) and research.

Since our incorporation, or if you will, “journey to inclusion,”

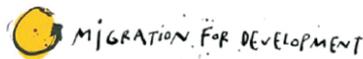
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THE JOURNEY TO INCLUSION

The
National Organisation of Deported Migrants
(NODM)



The Board of Advisors, secretariat and membership of NODM thank the University of the West Indies (Mona), the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme and the British High Commission for bringing us this far on our journey.

WELCOME HOME!

in fulfilment of those objectives, NODM, I once again repeat, accomplished a great deal.

Yes it has been productive years. However in all this, during 2016 we lost our founding president under circumstances that still have many of us asking questions, why? What if? Questions that leads to more questions. Be that as it may, I believe we have withstood the test of time, because while there are still questions, we have continued, as no doubt, our founding president would have had us do. I remember a friend once said to me, Ossie, when I am not here anymore I don't those who remain to use that excuse for not continuing, by saying say well, you weren't there so....what!!! If the work I did meant anything then carry it on.



Let me make clear that this “message” is about NODM objectives. That is what I wish to speak about.

Objective “To make representations to key state and civic agencies on ALL matters pertaining to the rights, status and treatment of deported persons.”

I am proud to announce that in this attempt, NODM is a member of several important focus groups. Among them:

- National Working Group on International Migration and Development (NWGIMD) facilitated by Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).
- National Technical Working Group on Deportation facilitated by the Ministry of National Security (MNS).
- A stakeholder member of other ad hoc touching on any matters pertaining to the rights, status and treatment of deported persons,”

Objective: “To plan and implement ways, means and projects that will lead to the social-economic uplift and empowerment of deported Jamaicans.

This, of all our objectives, the economic uplift aspect, remains a very difficult attempt. We are constantly seeking ways towards its fulfilment and have identified some themes as guide. Themes that NODM have consistently advocated:

- (1) “Transforming into economic activities, the resources, experience, skills and energies of deported migrants, and**
- (2) “Exploring prospects for income generation among Involuntary Returning Migrants**
- (3) “Maximizing opportunities for income generation and wealth creation among Involuntary Returning Migrants.”**

We consistently receive requests, or if you will questions, from returnees for assistance with employment, be it whether NODM can directly provide employment, knows any one (businesses) that are hiring, can NODM help to facilitate self-employment/entrepreneurial endeavours? Most times the answer to these request/questions have been “no.”

I will begin to address this issue, by sharing some observations over the years. Quite a bit of grant funding indicative of geared towards “training, employment and education” have been spent on skills training. While this method is supported by NODM, batches of persons have received skills training and still remains unemployed. It is therefore suggested that future assist in the areas of “training, employment and education,” seriously consider assisting persons who have received such training to start their own “small” business either individually, or ideally as a group based on the training received. In addition, it is suggested that serious consideration be given to assist persons who return with viable skills to start their own “small” business, again, either individually or ideally as a group based on skills-set.

Objective: To foster and develop among deported migrants understanding of their fundamental rights in the Jamaican state and society.

Workshops and forums have been our main tool towards accomplishing this objective, and though not fully achieved, as each successive batch of persons must receive this fostering, it can be said that we have tried to fulfil this objective. A picture is said to be worth a thousand, so these pictures that I am sharing with you, of past workshops, is therefore worth several thousand words that I will spare you.



Action Workshop (2010-2011) UWI



Workshop Graduation July 2011 (UWI)



Objective: Nurture alliances with agencies and NGO's that advocate for and provide services to deported migrants.

A quote from a member of the executive is here fitting. "The level of enfranchisement in any society will be influenced in large part by the behaviour of the majority of its citizens." (Dwight Jones, ref. **Cultural Issues and the Stigmas Associated with Deportation**).

NGO's working in the field in whatever limited ways, we need to collaborate where it counts. This may mean changing some of our strategies, creating new ways to assist in the reintegration process, and examining our philosophies about deportation in order to develop reintegration sustainability and maintain such sustainability and move forward, beyond increments, of little value in the overall picture.

I would be remiss if I were to make what is most often described as "president message," without addressing the wider Jamaican society, regarding the traditional or if you will generalized thinking about deported persons. In one word, the stigma that have accompanied deportation.

Jamaica society must begin to entertain a new way of thinking about deportation, and I daresay, at the level that needs to begin the process, government, that work has begun, led by wise elements within the Ministry of National Security.

In this, I will take credit on behalf of NODM staff, led by our Board Chair, Professor Bernard Headley, who from day one embarked on a mission to build a "counter- narrative." That is,

as recently noted, “[T]o counter through focussed struggle an expected negative trajectory of more crime; and to create instead, within the ‘deportee’ population, an alternate capacity for strengthening community and the Jamaican nation.”

In all this, as the day-to-day leader of this organization, I am clear about what NODM needs to do and what is distinctive about the NODM.

We are the only organization in Jamaica, and I say this without malice, whose primary concentration is reintegration into Jamaican society of IRM’s. Those, I must say, who truly would like to make Jamaica their home, “a place to live” for some, “work” for others, and still for others, “raise a family.”

We are a non-profit, functioning without a full infrastructure of paid staff, and so this reintegration concentration is done by a dedicated group of persons; a group of persons who though having to interchange roles at times, work tirelessly, without formal complaint. By this I mean, if we were to measure, like pay for like work, the two would not add up.

Their work speaks for itself and if true that “statistics drives policy” then over the past five years, April 2012 – March 2015, the statistics that they have amounted is pretty amazing, and their work speaks to accomplishments that deserves rewarding.

Transportation

Between drivers and caregivers, provided “meet-and-greet” and transportation to approximately four hundred and thirty two persons (432) April of 2012 – March of 2017. Correspondingly, drivers and caregivers logged four hundred and thirty-seven trips (437), one way it should be noted, mainly from Kingston to Montego Bay.

In the same period they reunited 228 of the 432 persons (unreported 2012-2013) with families and or friends upon arrival, while referring and transporting, in the immediate hours after arrival, approximately 87 (unreported 2012-2013) persons to emergency accommodation.

Re-documentation

Since April of 2012 – March of 2017, NODM’s Documentation Facilitator has re-documented approximately x persons by assisting them to acquire Jamaican documents, be it birth-certificates, tax registration numbers, retrieval of passports, food-handler’s permits, driver’s and learner’s licenses, you name it we assisted persons accordingly.

Customs

Our Custom Facilitator have facilitated approximately x persons with information that allowed easier access to retrieve personal effects from overseas, including receiving some items “duty-free.”

Our Regional Coordinators, four in total, likewise, provided hundreds of persons with follow-up reintegration services by way of regular phone calls to returnees.

You will note that I have used the word approximately because the statistics speaks only to those that have been documented, many others who have received assistance have gone un-documented.

I wish now to speak to some of our challenges. In doing so I note that where for others it may not be easy to acknowledge vulnerabilities and imperfections, we do not see our limitations as failures, but rather opportunities to grow and build a resilient organization, which will continue to have longevity.

Accommodation for vulnerable women and children

Although most of the persons that NODM have transported have returned to some semblance of family and as a result secured accommodation with family and or friends, accommodation for vulnerable returned women remains a troubling issue, and therefore one of our challenges.

On almost a weekly basis we are called upon to find creative temporary solutions to returned females in distress. In times past we managed a hostel for similar women and children, however this pilot was ended, as sponsors concluded that it was not “value for money.” I daresay NODM was not in support of its closure. There is now more than ever a need for such a safe space for vulnerable deported migrant women.

This year, as we celebrate five years, using 2012, as a starting point, I have the privilege of saying that a re-engaged NODM board is now energized and ready to build the sustainable capacity of NODM.

As important as grant funding is to our financials and to our planning, the kind of organization we strive to be and continue to grow towards is one that is sustainable; grant funding is therefore only one method towards sustainability. As such, we are always looking for additional ways to garner support to assist with our other initiatives.

That said, I likewise have the privilege of recognizing the support of our existing sponsors. Without it, we would not be able to continue our programs. We do not take lightly your support, and fully understand that without your financial assistance we could not provide the services we currently provide, given the capacity of our current infrastructure. We remain appreciative and look forward to influencing others to join our mission.



In closing I have saved the greatest recognition, for the last and thereby pause to recognizing all the staff. It is the hard work of dedicated staff that make for overall success. Especially in the past year, two individuals' stands out for additional recognition; our Documentation Facilitator and our Human Resource Facilitator. Smile, you know who you are. Thank you all for your dedication and hard work.

Oswald Dawkins

NODM President