



## JAMAICA, Latin America and Caribbean

*Submitted by Paulette Stewart, April 2014*



Population and literacy levels	<p>Population: 2,950,210 (July 2015 est.)</p> <p>Literacy rate: 88.7%</p> <p>Male: 84%; Female: 93.1% (2015 est.)</p> <p>Definition: age 15 and over can read and write</p> <p>Languages: English; English patois Source: <a href="#">CIA World Factbook</a></p>
Overview of education and school library situation	<p>There are over one thousand government schools in Jamaica and most of these have school library facilities or limited provision for a library collection in their schools.</p> <p>The Jamaica Library Service (JLS) receives funding from the Ministry of Education to provide</p>

resource material and provide training for teacher/librarians or personnel in charge of school libraries in 927 schools served. They range in categories from infant through to high school level. Other school libraries including private schools not served are provided with consultation based on requests from individual schools.

Currently there is no national policy for school libraries and as a consequence most primary schools and a few high schools do not have a full-time teacher/librarian in charge of the library. Many of these teachers are classroom teachers and so the library is not able to have the impact it should have on the teaching/learning process.

A Teacher/Librarian is qualified after gaining a first degree in Library and Information Studies from a recognized university. Shortage of professional staff, decreasing budgets and space constraints in schools are factors affecting school libraries in Jamaica.

In spite of the challenges faced, over sixty percent of school libraries served by the JLS are functional. This means that they have a designated library room, personnel in charge of the library and students have access to the collection.

Annual training seminars for teacher/librarians organized by the JLS provide professional development opportunities for persons in charge of school libraries. These seminars have benefited many teachers in assisting and motivating them to better manage their school libraries.

IASL conferences have been held several times in Jamaica:

1985 in Kingston with the theme: *Libraries and information – towards a policy for schools*

1996 in Ocho Rios with the theme: *Sustaining the Vision: School Library Imperatives for the 21st Century*

2011 in Kingston with the theme: *School Libraries: Empowering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner.*

Links to important associations/ contacts	<a href="#">Jamaica Library Service</a> <a href="#">National Library of Jamaica</a> <a href="#">Institute of Jamaica</a> <a href="#">Dept of Library &amp; Information Studies, University of West Indies</a> <a href="#">School of Education, University of West Indies</a>
Particular issues and needs of the country	<p>There are many trained teachers without jobs. Presently, there is no national Information Literacy Curriculum at both the Primary and High school levels. Some librarians are in the process of writing these and hopefully they will be ready for the beginning of the school year 2014-2015.</p> <p>Transshipment point for illicit drugs; human trafficking; deforestation; coastal and air pollution; child labour (6%) Source: <a href="#">CIA World Factbook</a></p>
Famous authors (children's and young adult materials)	<p><i>Popular authors (most not from Jamaica):</i> Dr. Seuss, Miles Kelly, Jeff Kinney, Ann M. Martin, Robert Lawrence Stint, Joanne Rowling, Art Mawhinney, Carolyn Keene, Enid Blyton, Franklin Dixon, Cyril Everard Palmer, Diane Brown, Francesca Simon, Judy Blume, Michael Anthony, Jack Schaefer</p>
Links to literature of the country (children's and young adult)	<a href="#">Books by Jamaican authors for Children 8-14</a> <a href="#">National Library of Jamaica</a>

materials)	<a href="#">Sunzone</a> <a href="#">Images of Jamaican Literature</a>
Links to SL programs or advocacy tools	
News/Reports	<a href="#">UNESCO International Bureau of Education – Latin America and the Caribbean</a> links including world data on the education in Jamaica and contacts

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