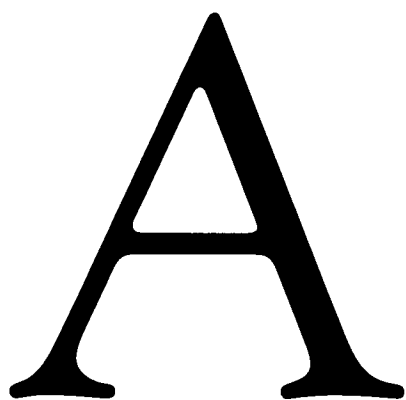


THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FROM AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS TO DEAF COMMUNITIES IN JAMAICA



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AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS bringing assistance to deaf people in developing countries unintentionally create relationships of dependency or oppression rather than relationships of support. Using qualitative methods, the author examined the effectiveness of development assistance provided to the Jamaican Deaf community by two American churches, one American nongovernmental organization, and one U.S. federal agency. Documents were reviewed and observations were made. Interviews were conducted with more than 60 deaf and hearing people involved with the American organizations, the Jamaican organizations, and deaf Jamaican beneficiaries. The author concludes that the Jamaican Deaf community was often excluded in planning, designing, or evaluating programs, and was unsatisfied with the American assistance it received. Results also indicate that the American organizations were poorly prepared to work with the Deaf community. Suggestions for American organizations wishing to strengthen and empower deaf people through development assistance in developing countries are proposed.

While not all people with disabilities are poor, there is evidence that a disproportionate number throughout the world live in extreme or chronic poverty (World Bank, 2005). In a study for the World Bank, Richard L. Metts (2000) asserted that "half a billion disabled people are undisputedly amongst the poorest of the poor" (p. 39). Elwan (1999) estimated that people with disabilities make up "15 to 20% of the poorest in developing countries" (p. 15). Most people with disabilities are poor, particularly those living in rural areas, are excluded from many social

services, and have no means of getting access to education. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has estimated that only 3% of children with disabilities attend school in developing countries, yet an estimated 70% could attend regular schools if they were physically accessible and accommodations were made to support these children (UNICEF, 1999). The negative attitudes of professionals, parents, teachers, and communities exclude people with disabilities from participation in society, educational opportunities, and access to health

care and employment (Harris & Enfield, 2003).

The highest incidence of deafness occurs in developing countries, where about 56 million of the world's approximately 70 million deaf people (80%) live (Joutsalainen, 1991; World Health Organization, 1999). Throughout the developing world there is (a) a lack of awareness, knowledge, and information about people with disabilities (Scofield & Fineberg, 2002; Heinicke-Motsch & Sygall, 2003); (b) a lack of respect for and understanding of Deaf culture and sign language (Lane, 1992; Lemmo, 2003); (c) a lack of quality education for deaf children (Moulton, Andrews, & Smith, 1996); and (d) a lack of medical care, vocational programs, and legal and social services for deaf people (DuBow, Geer, & Strauss, 1992). The unemployment rate among deaf people is 3 times higher than the national average in the developing world; only about 20% of the world's deaf population attends school; and in some countries deaf people are unable to vote, marry another deaf person, drive a motor vehicle, work in certain jobs, or establish Deaf associations (Joutsalainen, 1991; Mäkipää, 1993). Deaf people suffer as much as other people with disabilities living in developing countries in terms of finding a job, becoming educated, and receiving adequate health care. Consequently, many deaf people live on the fringe of society, undereducated and underemployed, and they and other family members often experience economic hardship and social isolation (Mäkipää, 1993).

Many governments lack the resources to develop and support national infrastructure, educational systems, and social services, not only for people with disabilities but for citizens in general (Oxfam International, 1999). Richer nations have attempted to alleviate poverty in developing coun-

tries with foreign assistance programs. In the United States, the federal government, churches, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are all sources of educational and social service programs to assist the people of these resource-limited countries. American foreign assistance programs that include people with disabilities are rare, and when assistance does exist, it may be the only opportunity for people with disabilities to learn to live independently and to become fully participating, fully contributing members of society (National Council on Disability, 1996; Stone, 1999).

Unfortunately, few foreign assistance programs ever reach deaf people in developing countries. Of the millions of dollars the U.S. government spends on foreign assistance programs in more than 100 countries, in only 7 are even a small number of deaf people assisted, either through the donation of equipment or in small programs for, or including, the deaf (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2003).

Development assistance means ameliorating the human condition by easing poverty and realizing human potential in developing countries (Cowen & Shenton, 1995). Some organizations offer aid to poor communities in developing countries that can enhance the integrity, growth, and independence of those served. But problems can also arise when any international organization offers assistance to those in need (Clark, 1990):

1. Instead of responding to the needs of the community, some international aid organizations enter communities without an invitation and establish programs based on their own organizational expertise and goals (Cheru, 1988).
2. Rather than a collaborative approach, a dependency approach

may be used that encourages those being served to become reliant on the serving agency (Ajuwon, 1996).

3. When invited to assist a community, rather than design mission statements that reflect the community's needs, donors have on occasion brought about fundamental redesigns of projects or goals based on their own social values. This "top-down" management style does not promote community ownership of a program, nor take into account the relevance of cultural factors (M. Thomas & M. J. Thomas, 1998).
4. A large part of project management time may be devoted to satisfying donor prerequisites and meeting organizational and procedural requirements rather than focusing on beneficiaries' needs (Clements, 1996; Ogoke, 1999).
5. Pilot studies are often done under the most ideal situations, which makes duplication of such projects or improvement in services based on successful pilot projects unrealistic in poorer or rural areas (Chambers, 1983).
6. U.S. technical assistants arrive to teach development strategies and techniques despite the availability of native experts (Krueger, 1993).
7. Decision making tends to be dominated by local elites. There is little real grassroots participation in project planning and design (Chambers, 1983; U.S.-Africa Trade Policy Working Group, 1997; Wilson, 2000).
8. Technological advances commonly found in the United States (e.g., computers or hearing aids) are donated without proper training or continued financial support to maintain the

equipment (Mittleman & Pasha, 1997).

9. Some development agencies may support projects that strengthen government policies and practices that oppress rather than empower aid recipients (Hoy, 1999).

The National Council on Disability (2003) has recommended that the U.S. Congress amend the Foreign Assistance Act to require that every U.S. agency operating abroad be accessible and include people with disabilities within its organizations and in its overseas development programming. If federal agencies increase their inclusion of people with disabilities in the future, it is imperative that they avoid the nine problems I have listed when working with Deaf communities overseas.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to determine from the collected data the best practices for delivering international aid from federal and private U.S.-based organizations to Deaf communities in developing countries and the schools, clubs, associations, church groups, and other organized projects or programs serving deaf people in such countries.

Theoretical Framework

Research aimed at determining what could constitute best practices for American organizations working with Deaf communities in developing countries has not yet been conducted. Thus, seven determinants of effectiveness found in the general field of disabilities and development were identified (Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Frost, 1999; Heinicke-Motsch & Sygall, 2003; Hurst, 1999; Neimann, Greenstein, & David, 2004; Schneider & Segovia, 1990; Stone, 1999) that may also determine the effectiveness of

development assistance from American organizations to Deaf communities overseas:

1. The provider employs deaf workers in its own organization who are associated with the overseas program.
2. The provider supports and works with indigenous Deaf organizations.
3. Indigenous deaf people are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program.
4. There is an understanding on the part of the provider about Deaf culture, and about issues relating to communication, language, and deaf education. (For example, is the provider cognizant of issues and trends in deaf education or knowledgeable about the history, arts, and values of the particular Deaf community with which it will be working?)
5. There is an understanding on the part of the provider about how different cultures respond to deafness and construct the meanings of deafness and disability in the developing country's society. (For example, in the majority culture is being deaf perceived as either a negative or positive attribute? Is there a religious belief that deafness is a gift, or punishment, from God?)
6. The provider is directly accountable to the people who support it and who sent its representatives to the developing country.
7. The provider networks and shares with others who work in the field of deafness and development.

I conjectured that these characteristics or factors found in disability programming might also transfer to and

contribute to an effective development program for Deaf communities.

Methodology

Because the present study was qualitative, data were gathered with the intent of analyzing, interpreting, and theorizing about their meaning with the goal of improving American development assistance to Deaf communities in developing countries. An interpretive case study approach was used in which the field research developed as the data were collected, and the bounded system consisted of those American organizations that give development assistance to Deaf communities in Jamaica.

Country of Study

The Caribbean island nation of Jamaica was chosen as the country of study for five reasons:

1. Jamaica is a developing country (Bloom et al., 2001).
2. All three types of American organizations that offer development assistance to developing countries (church, NGO, federal agency) existed in Jamaica. Only two other countries in the world (Vietnam and Kenya) hosted all three types of organizations. It was unusual to find one country in which so many American development assistance programs were offered to the Deaf community.
3. I was able to speak to hearing study participants in English, and adapt my American Sign Language (ASL) to Jamaican Sign Language (JSL) to speak to deaf participants.
4. The four American organizations active in Jamaica gave permission to observe their programs, interview their personnel, and review their documents.

5. Jamaica's proximity to the United States made it financially possible to do the study.

In November, 1999, a "National Policy on Disability" was passed by the Jamaican Parliament that was based on the United Nations' Standard Rules for People With Disabilities. The Standard Rules provide guidelines for civil societies to work with their governments in equalizing opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Jamaican National Policy is not enforceable, though, since it does not include any legal sanctions (International Disability Rights Monitor, 2004). The Jamaican government had assumed responsibility for educating children with disabilities in 1974, yet only 2,202 children were enrolled in educational programs in 2003. Jamaica has counted on private voluntary organizations to act as partners in the funding of segregated schools for children with disabilities (Jamaica Coalition on the Rights of the Child, 1999). As in most developing countries, families in Jamaica are responsible for caring for their child with a disability, with modest help from social service agencies (Thorburn, 1999). The few schools for the deaf are minimally supported by the government. Several schools for deaf children in Jamaica would not exist without management, guidance, and fund-raising by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Mennonite Central Committee (an American NGO), the Jamaica Association for the Deaf (a Jamaican NGO), and the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and the Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf (two American Christian ministries).

American Organizations Involved in the Study

One U.S. federal agency, one NGO, and two religious organizations were

Table 1

Attributes of the Relationships Between the American Assistance Organizations and Their Jamaican Partners

American organization	Jamaican partner	Project	Forms of assistance
U.S. Agency for International Development (federal agency)	Jamaica Association for the Deaf	Provision of 10 Deaf culturalists	Financial contributions School materials
Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions (church group)	Maranatha School for the Deaf	K-12 school	Financial contributions Missionaries work teams School materials School buildings
Mennonite Central Committee (nongovernmental organization)	Maranatha School for the Deaf	K-12 school	Financial contributions School board member
Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf (church group)	No partner	Three K-12 schools Jamaican Deaf Village	Financial contributions Missionaries Work teams School materials School buildings

considered in the present study. These entities and the forms of assistance they provided are listed in Table 1.

Federal Agency: U.S. Agency for International Development

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the principal bilateral development assistance agency of the U.S. government. USAID supports the Jamaica Association for the Deaf, a Jamaican NGO managed by hearing administrators that oversees six public schools for the deaf in Jamaica. At the time of the present study, USAID was paying the salaries of 10 "Deaf culturalists" acting as teacher aides in the Jamaica Association for the Deaf's schools through the Uplifting Adolescents Project. The 10 male and female Deaf culturalists were high school graduates fluent in JSL. They served as JSL models and general role models for the deaf students, and JSL models for the hearing teachers who were learning sign.

Religious Organization I: Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions

In 1975, a missionary of the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions founded the Maranatha School for the Deaf. The Board of Missions and American volunteers financed and built the school, traveling to Jamaica, purchasing materials, and donating labor. The Maranatha School for the Deaf is a residential/day school enrolling about 30 children ages 4 to 18 years. It is one of the few rural schools for deaf children. At the time of the present study, two of the five teachers were deaf, and the sole teacher assistant was deaf. The property and facilities were turned over to the Jamaican Mennonite Church in 1979. The Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions provides approximately US\$24,000 per year toward the school's operating costs. It has also obtained additional educational resources and equipment, and at the time of the present study two missionary families were acting

as school support staff. Less than 10% of the school's operating costs are covered by Jamaicans themselves. Students receive religious instruction.

The NGO: The Mennonite Central Committee

An NGO, the Mennonite Central Committee also collaborates with the Maranatha School for the Deaf. During the past quarter century, the Mennonite Central Committee has placed volunteers in the school and given financial support. North Americans make monthly donations to a "Global Family Fund" that helps pay the children's tuition. The Mennonite Central Committee no longer sends volunteers to work at the school. An American representative sits on the school board. Although volunteers and funding come through the Mennonite Church, the Central Committee is considered an NGO, not a church group, since it supports social services and does not evangelize.

Religious Organization II: Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf

The Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf sent American work teams to Jamaica to build three schools for the deaf. It is also building a "Jamaican Deaf Village" where deaf Jamaicans can live in one location, earn wages working in an on-site factory, raise their families, and meet their needs for fellowship and spiritual nourishment (Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf, n.d.). The Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf has about a dozen American missionaries working in Jamaica. It has also organized a gospel team made up of deaf Jamaican Christian students who travel to churches, schools, and colleges and sign to recorded music, share personal testimonies, and present short dramas to raise money for the schools.

Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument of data collection, deciding what to ask, how and when to ask it, and what to observe and record (Mertens, 1998). I am an advanced signer of ASL (as tested by Gallaudet University's sign language proficiency test) and learned JSL in order to communicate with the deaf Jamaican participants. JSL, which is used widely throughout the island, is based on American signs. Native Jamaican signers who know ASL estimate that 80%–90% of JSL consists of American signs. I was introduced to the study participants as an American researcher interested in improving the effectiveness of American development assistance to deaf Jamaicans, and informed them that the results of the study would be shared with them, and also appear in a professional journal. I informed the participants that it was my hope that the study's results would be beneficial to other American organizations wishing to work with Deaf communities in developing countries. I collected data by making

observations, conducting interviews, and reviewing documents.

Participants

The study participants were individuals who were naturally involved with the organizations, schools, and programs, such as administrators, program managers, parents of students, students over the age of 18 years, members of the Kingston Deaf Fellowship (an indigenous Deaf association), teachers, missionaries, and deaf church members. Some participants were specifically chosen for the study because of positions they held in the organization (e.g., program director, school principal, elected leader in a Deaf organization) and their resulting access to information. Asked where they would be most comfortable being interviewed, the participants answered questions in school buildings, their homes, a church, restaurants, parks, their offices, the airport, a university library, and on the telephone. Roles and characteristics of the study participants are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
Roles and Characteristics of Interviewed Study Participants

Role ^a	Study participants			
	Hearing	Deaf	Male	Female
Administrator	15	0	7	8
Teacher	9	2		11
Teacher aide	—	9	3	6
Missionary	6	0	2	4
Interpreter (as identified by the Deaf community)	3		1	2
Member of the Kingston Deaf Fellowship	22	18	10	12
Graduate of one of the schools in the study	—	27	14	13
Parent of a deaf child or adult	3	3	1	5
Deaf individual with no affiliation with any of the aforementioned groups	—	5	3	2
Member of an American work team ^b	9	—	5	4

^aSome participants served in more than one role. For example, a parent of a deaf child may have also been a teacher.

^bA member of an American work team is an individual sponsored by an American church to spend about a week in Jamaica constructing schools and other buildings for the Deaf community.

Observations

Observations, ranging from nonparticipation to complete participation, were made at all of the schools, church services, formal and informal meetings of the Kingston Deaf Fellowship, social gatherings of deaf adults around Jamaica, a weekend retreat with Mennonite Central Committee volunteers, the homes and workplaces of missionaries from the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions, the homes of deaf Jamaicans, and the homes of American work team members. I would either write notes while observing, noting verbal and nonverbal behavior, or record my observations later in the evening.

Data Collection

In preparation for the present study, I contacted all four aid organizations and the Kingston Deaf Fellowship by telephone or e-mail to request permission to do interviews, collect documents, and observe their activities. Official approval to gather data in Jamaica was granted by USAID/Jamaica and accepted by the Gallaudet University Institutional Review Board. After permission was granted, I interviewed those members of each group willing to be interviewed or observed (or both). In keeping with the snowball technique, a qualitative research data collection method, participants then gave names of other people in the Deaf community who might be willing to speak to me. I interviewed participants in spoken English or JSL. All interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed by means of Dragon NaturallySpeaking software. When interviewing deaf participants, I followed the interview protocol, voicing the number of the question, signing the questions voice off in JSL, then voicing the participant's response for the audiotape. Additional questions asking for clarification or probing for more

information were voiced first, then signed in JSL. I also took handwritten notes during the interviews on the environment and participants' body language and apparent emotions. The participants included more than 60 people, hearing and deaf, involved in the organizations. Most of the interviews were done in Jamaica, but some American administrators were interviewed in the United States in person or on the telephone. Open-ended questions were asked such as "How has this program served your needs as a deaf individual?" or "How would you describe to me, a foreigner, Jamaican Deaf culture?"

Documents and Records Review

Web sites, public documents, privately shared documents, brochures, newsletters, articles, flyers about the organizations, photographs, and archived historical files were reviewed.

Analysis of the Data

In order to obtain as much information as possible from the data, I applied a combination of strategies (narrative analysis, content analysis, and constant comparative methodology) to gain a comprehensive picture using all perspectives. The qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti was used to codify and analyze the findings. I adhered to criteria identified by scholars in the field of qualitative research for establishing rigor in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mertens, 1998):

1. *Credibility and persistent observation.* I spent 6 weeks in Jamaica and observed classes, church services, and Kingston Deaf Fellowship meetings and activities; stayed in the residential schools or with deaf families; toured facilities; and visited administrative offices.
2. *Peer debriefing.* A deaf Jamaican leader—as identified by the Deaf community—and an American hearing administrator who had resided in Jamaica for 4 years reviewed portions of my transcripts, listened to my observations, and gave critical feedback as the study progressed.
3. *Progressive subjectivity.* Throughout the study, I kept a journal of my thoughts and impressions as I gathered data and shared them with the peer debriefers for comments and suggestions.
4. *Member checks.* I reviewed my interview notes with the participants either verbally, through JSL, or by e-mail, to ensure that I had correctly understood the information that was given, and to allow the interviewees to revise or correct what was recorded.
5. *Triangulation.* All observations, documents, and interviews were triangulated to ensure that the gathered data were accurate.
6. *Transferability.* The thick (i.e., detailed) description of the present study will allow readers to determine if the research is applicable to their needs.
7. *Dependability.* The data became "saturated"; in other words, the data gathered toward the end of the study were repetitive and no new information was becoming evident.
8. *Confirmability and authenticity.* Field notes, observations, and interview transcripts were reviewed by the peer debriefers.
9. *Ontological/catalytic authenticity.* During the interview process, individuals' conscious experience of being part of the Deaf community and their role in it became more informed or sophisticated. This becomes evident as one reads the study results.

Results

Factors of Effectiveness in the American Organizations

The present study was designed to determine (a) which of the seven factors of effectiveness were evident in the American organizations and (b) the level of satisfaction the Deaf community felt with each organization. Only one of the seven factors of effectiveness was evidenced, factor 6 (accountability to American constituents), and even that was apparent in only three of the four organizations.

Factor 1: The American Provider Employs Deaf Workers in Its Own Organization Who Associate With the Overseas Program

The four American organizations had neither deaf employees, deaf missionaries, nor deaf volunteers who were associated with the Jamaican programs. Both Jamaican and American interviewees registered surprise when asked about the possibility of working with deaf Americans. A deaf Jamaican teacher said,

If we had deaf people working with [the Jamaica Association for the Deaf] who were trained in teaching, it would do many things. First, hearing people could see that deaf people can get degrees at universities and that we are capable people. Secondly, the American workers would be deaf so we wouldn't have to teach them because they already understand Deaf culture and understand us inside and out and know our language, JSL. The kids would understand them well and connect with them right away. They would be easily accessible to us when we had questions instead of what we struggle through now with communication and prejudice.

All four groups were amenable to hiring deaf individuals but were unsure how to locate them.

Factor 2: The Provider Supports and Works With Indigenous Deaf Organizations

The Kingston Deaf Fellowship was the only formal indigenous Deaf organization in Jamaica, and its members met formally and informally three to four times a week at church services, social activities, and formal weekly meetings. None of the four American organizations supported or worked with the Kingston Deaf Fellowship or any other Jamaican Deaf organization. USAID worked with the Jamaica Association for the Deaf, a hearing-run organization that made a concerted effort to include deaf people in its decision making. Yet USAID did not work directly with the Kingston Deaf Fellowship.

Factor 3: Indigenous Deaf People Are Involved in the Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation of the Program

Deaf adults had been involved in the planning and implementation of the Uplifting Adolescents Project, sponsored by USAID/Jamaica, since its inception, but not because of USAID's directives but because of the manner in which the Jamaica Association for the Deaf functioned. None of the other three American organizations involved indigenous deaf people in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their programs. Hearing people with little or no knowledge about deafness were often responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating projects. For example, American evaluators without backgrounds in deafness and unable to communicate in JSL reviewed USAID's program at the Jamaica Association for the Deaf. Be-

cause there are very few JSL interpreters in Jamaica, the administrators and interpreters, who themselves were being evaluated, had to interpret when deaf people were being questioned about the administrators' and the interpreters' services. One deaf adult commented,

It always happens. People who don't know about deafness come and say, "That sign language, how beautiful!" and say everything is fine. Why not hire someone who is deaf and knows education? Even if they aren't deaf but someone who can tell us what we do right and wrong.

Major decisions about the Maranatha School for the Deaf and the Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf were made by hearing board members, none of whom were trained in deaf education. When asked why no deaf Jamaicans sat on any of the three Caribbean Christian Center school boards or on its executive board, an administrator said,

I think some of it has to do with the level the deaf have reached in Jamaica: their understanding of what makes things work or not work. As far as a school's relationship with the government, imports/exports, foreigners coming in, et cetera, . . . Jamaica has very few if any deaf that have a grasp of some of those principles, and it is more on that level that the Board of Directors are working. I'm not saying that there are no capable deaf people at this point. I just don't know of any. Certainly not that are Christian. I don't know any.

Many deaf Jamaicans recounted one occasion when their input was requested by one of the four agencies. An administrator of the Jamaica Deaf

Village visited the Kingston Deaf Fellowship to share his idea of the Deaf Village with members of the fellowship and other people working with Deaf communities in Jamaica. Despite much negative feedback from the Deaf community, as reported by the deaf participants and the administrator of the Jamaica Deaf Village, the village was being built without further input or help from deaf Jamaicans. One deaf participant noted that when the Deaf community's opinion was solicited, it was not considered seriously.

Factors 4 and 5: There Is an Understanding on the Part of the Provider About Deaf Culture, and About Issues Relating to Communication, Language, and Deaf Education. There Is an Understanding on the Part of the Provider About How Different Cultures Respond to Deafness in the Developing Country's Society

As a whole, all four organizations had minimal understanding of Deaf culture, the issues that surround communication, language, and deaf education, or how the Jamaican culture constructs and responds to deafness. Except for a teacher trainer in Montego Bay, at the time of the study none of the American missionaries from the Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf, nor its American director, nor the board members (except for one deaf Canadian) could communicate fluently in JSL, held degrees related to deafness, or had previous experience with Deaf culture. A program director said,

How would I describe Jamaican Deaf culture? I don't know—I never sat down to try to think that through. Well . . . they seem very different to the hearing people. The deaf like to be together. They prefer

to be together more than with hearing people. They would rather be with their own.

Deaf culture was not supported, as JSL was not used in the schools by the hearing teachers and Deaf culture was neither taught nor encouraged. Input from the surrounding Deaf adult communities was neither valued, accepted, desired, or requested by the Maranatha School for the Deaf or the Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf, despite the wishes of local deaf adults to become involved in the schools. Deaf students in the schools were isolated from a normal social life in either a Deaf or hearing community. One deaf mother of a child attending one of the schools said,

In the school, [the students] were taken care of like children and not respected for the individuals they would be in the future. American missionaries bring this. Americans are from the other side of the world. We need to teach [deaf children] to cope with difficulties, how to dress, behave, enjoy their lives, to relate to other people, how to not be focused on yourself and respect other people. What they learn in school is really pitiful, and they leave the school and fall into many problems.

The Mennonite Central Committee volunteer who sat on the board of the Maranatha School for the Deaf had a general notion about deafness but was not trained or experienced in that area. The Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions Caribbean regional director, who lived in the United States and regularly visited the Maranatha School, was one person involved with the program who was conversant with the subject of deafness and able to use JSL. The four missionaries from the Virginia Men-

nonite Board of Missions arrived at the Maranatha School unable to sign, with no knowledge of Deaf culture or training in deaf education. None of the missionaries knew any deaf people before they arrived in Jamaica. There was no orientation about deafness and related issues for the missionaries and work teams sent by the Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf and the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions before they arrived in Jamaica. There was no evaluation process through which specialists knowledgeable about deaf education could judge whether the education of the children was satisfactory. USAID personnel were very honest about their lack of knowledge about deafness. Questions about Deaf culture, communication, and language were often answered "I never really thought about that" or "I don't know."

Factor 6: The Provider Is Directly Accountable to the People Who Support It and Who Sent Its Representatives to the Developing Country

The Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf distributed a newsletter to its constituency about new buildings, school enrollment, and the arrival of new missionaries, although no financial information was given. The Caribbean Christian Center also distributed promotional materials describing its schools' successes. The Mennonite Central Committee and the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions reported regularly to their American constituencies that donated financial and material resources. Yet the actual "results" of the schooling deaf children received through these three organizations was not detailed in the information sent to fund donors. There was no mention that the majority of deaf children "graduated" from the Maranatha School for the Deaf and the Caribbean

Christian Center schools with very poor academic skills, and returned to their homes with minimal job skills.

USAID did not have a detailed report on its partnered program with the Jamaica Association for the Deaf.

Factor 7: The Provider Networks and Shares With Others Who Work in the Field of Deafness and Development

None of the four American organizations networked or shared with others working in the field of deafness and development in Jamaica or in the United States.

The lack of the seven effectiveness factors in the American organizations resulted in frustration and anger in many of the American volunteers and missionaries who worked in Jamaica. One American worker said, "How am I suppose to communicate with [the deaf children] when I can't even speak their language? I didn't know anything about the deaf when I came here. It's dumb." American work teams that arrived to erect buildings would leave the island with odd ideas about deaf people. One college-age volunteer told me that deaf people are "chained to trees" at their homes, so "thank God for these schools we build."

Deaf Adults' Perceptions of American Programming

The Jamaican Deaf community was concerned about the services offered by the American organizations. American providers' responses to that concern included "What we offer them is better than nothing" and "If we weren't here, they would be at home with nothing." Deaf people agreed that the Jamaican government offered them no special services and no education, and in fact had laws that discriminated against them. So they were grateful for the help. In fact, most of the graduates of these programs were able to read to

some extent because of the American-supported schools. Where many deaf children would have been isolated in their villages, the schools offered some education and an environment in which to learn JSL from peers, teachers, and teacher aides who were deaf. Without these opportunities, many deaf Jamaicans would be illiterate and would have been deprived of learning Deaf Jamaican culture. Yet, members of the Deaf community who participated in the present study were deeply concerned by other effects of the development assistance they received from the United States.

Institutional Dependency

Many deaf adults felt negatively about the ways in which Jamaicans had become dependent on American child sponsorship programs and American work teams. A deaf adult working on one of the school campuses said that the children learned at a young age that they wanted to grow up and "be rich like the white Americans" who visited. One day, at a school, I met a 23-year-old deaf graduate who told me he visited the school when work teams arrived so that he could find a white American to marry so that he could live in the United States.

Learning Dependency

A deaf adult mentioned the phenomenon of what he called "learning dependency"—that by continually depending on outside agencies for one's well-being, deaf adults did not learn how to be responsible for themselves. Deaf empowerment was not a concept taught in the schools. One older deaf adult said, "The hearing will always make it worse for us. Worse, worse, worse. Deaf people must stand up for themselves." There were some deaf adults who believed the Jamaica Deaf Village was necessary because deaf people "learned to be lazy." "Many deaf

don't want to accept responsibility. They'd rather other people do it for them. They learned that from Americans taking care of them."

A leader in the Kingston Deaf Fellowship complained that few people in the club had learned leadership skills but had observed white Americans their whole lives, bringing gifts and free labor to their schools. He signed, "Deaf Jamaicans are weak. If I give the deaf adults work to do for the club, they won't do anything. There is no enthusiasm. They say they will do something, but then do nothing."

Marginalization

Several deaf adults signed they felt they were being "pushed away from the hearing" or "separated from the hearing." When American work teams arrived in Jamaica to raise school buildings or to do construction at the Jamaican Deaf Village, deaf Jamaicans rarely joined them. A student said,

Sometimes at night, "Hands in Praise" [the Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf young adult music group] will sign songs for them, and we can talk a little bit to the Americans . . . but they don't get to know us. [The American work teams] want to see the country, and then they fly back in 1 week. They should stay 2 weeks, and then they could meet the deaf. They come and fly back and forth and don't know us.

Deaf men felt especially excluded from the building of schools that supported children from their own community, and were ashamed that they were not allowed to participate. Deaf teachers and deaf leaders questioned why American administrators never spoke directly to them, since the Jamaican Deaf community believes that American deaf people are respected in the United States.

Desired Assistance

Deaf adults throughout Jamaica were asked what assistance they desired from American organizations. The majority wanted American organizations to work directly with Jamaican Deaf organizations and not with hearing people "helping" the Deaf community. The Deaf community was also eager to work with deaf Americans. As for their thoughts about partnered projects, deaf adults made several suggestions about the form that development assistance from American organizations should take (listed in descending order of frequency):

1. interpreter training programs
2. legal aid
3. leadership training
4. job skill training for adults and assistance in finding employment
5. teachers training in deaf education and multilingual education
6. continuing education for deaf adults (on topics such as HIV and parenting skills)
7. establishment of local and national Deaf associations around the island
8. promotion of Deaf awareness in hearing society
9. acquisition of TTYs and computers for communication on and off the island
10. development of a JSL dictionary

The deaf adults claimed that implementing these suggestions would enable the Deaf community to work for their own empowerment and lessen their need for American assistance in the future.

The Americans and the Jamaican deaf adults agreed that the seven factors of effectiveness (although not stated as "factors of effectiveness" during the interviews) would be very helpful in improving programming.

Discussion Limited Evidence of Effectiveness

None of the four organizations evidenced all seven factors of effectiveness, which the deaf study participants considered necessary for successful community development. Yet all four American organizations deserve commendation for their desire and efforts to improve the lives of deaf Jamaicans. Throughout the interview process as well as in informal conversations, all four organizations expressed interest in improving their programs and collaborating with the Deaf community, and requested information on how to do so. The administrators understood that when American organizations decide to work in developing countries with Deaf communities, it is imperative that they include deaf adults in all aspects of programming so that they do not become dependent or marginalized in their own communities. Deaf Jamaicans had definite views about the projects they desired and how they would like to collaborate with American organizations.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen (1999) has written that the opposite of oppression is freedom of choice. The results of the present study show that the Jamaican Deaf community wishes to have a voice in its own "development," and would like eventually to administer its own programs rather than depend on others. One would imagine that American organizations would find this an appealing objective: to bring an end to the economic aid and the sending of many American volunteers to Jamaica. Agreeing to participate in a system that includes deaf people and works with them is a means of fighting oppression and fostering the independence of the deaf and their freedom to choose to live as they wish.

Some Recommendations for Changes in Policy and Practice

International organizations must write and enforce a disability policy in order for all programs to naturally include people with disabilities. I suggest that American organizations that are already working with Deaf communities overseas or are considering offering assistance must incorporate the seven factors of effectiveness in their organizational policy. Positive social and cultural transformation for deaf people occurs in developing countries after the Deaf community has built a strong infrastructure from which to organize, educate, and mobilize its people. Deaf people know where they want to go, but may need appropriate American development assistance to get there.

Signs of Progress

International organizations are beginning to recognize the human rights of people with disabilities and are discussing strategies for including them in development projects and programs (InterAction American Council for Voluntary International Action, 2004; Inter-American Development Bank, 2004; World Bank, 2004). Yet American university programs offering degrees in international development do not train their students to work in developing countries with people with disabilities (Beck, 2002). Only one American university course, offered in a distance learning format, currently prepares students to work with people with disabilities in developing countries (Gallaudet University, 2004). International development degree programs should offer a dedicated course on working with people with disabilities in developing countries, or routinely incorporate information and training on this topic into existing courses. Deaf people should then be encouraged and

actively recruited to enroll in international development degree programs.

Since the time when the data were collected for the present study, the Jamaica Association for the Deaf has invited deaf professionals from the United States to make short visits to work with the Deaf community through the United States' Peace Corps program. The Florida Association for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas (FAVACA), a private not-for-profit organization, has sent both hearing and deaf professionals educated in various disciplines related to deafness to work with the Jamaica Association for the Deaf (FAVACA, 2005). Iris Souter, the association's director, said that it is making a concerted effort to train deaf leaders so that one day it will be the Jamaica Association of the Deaf, rather than *for* the Deaf. She believes that inviting deaf professionals who know how to work with deaf Jamaicans is imperative for empowering deaf Jamaicans (I. Souter, personal communication, June 2002). The Peace Corps program and the work of FAVACA are steps in a positive direction. Further research should be done, such as case studies of successful collaborations between American organizations and Deaf communities in developing countries.

International Assistance: At What Price?

In closing, I would like to address the argument of those who say that the goals of any volunteer organization, especially a religious one, however altruistic, may not ever entirely mesh with the goals of recipients of their work, missionary or otherwise. In reality, it is argued, there is an overriding mission to proselytize that provides a major impetus for the work of religious groups. As I have already mentioned in the present article, foreign assistance is often the only means

through which many deaf Jamaicans will ever be offered the opportunity for an education or job training. It is reasoned that deaf people should be grateful for the educational and employment opportunities offered by mission schools. Yet, I ask, at what price? I would like to offer five scenarios that cause me to pause and reflect on the nature of assistance sent overseas through religious organizations.

Whose "Jamaican Sign Language"?

The students and teachers of the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions deaf school were using JSL, which had been brought to the area by a deaf American missionary 25 years earlier. The school sat in a community of deaf adults who had their own sign language, which the schoolchildren derisively referred to as "country sign." The deaf adults had grown up using "country sign," and since the principal of the school would not allow them to visit with the children in the school because they were considered "backward," most deaf adults never learned "Jamaican" Sign Language. The use of ASL can be seen in mission schools worldwide, brought by American missionaries who did not acknowledge or respect the existing indigenous sign language. Native sign languages have disappeared and been replaced or highly influenced by ASL. Any American organization that offered hearing people development assistance on the condition that they learn English would be considered a colonizer and an oppressor. Should this not also be the case with those who impose their sign language on a Deaf culture? Many deaf people have no choice to attend school, other than an American mission school in their home country. Must they lose their native language in order to acquire services?

The Implication of Incompetence

The mother of a deaf child cried with me, saying that she was ashamed that Americans would think her an incompetent mother since her child's picture was one of many on a brochure used to raise money for an American mission school in Jamaica. "It is difficult for me, but I do pay the tuition. Why did they put her picture on this paper?" I suggested she approach the school officials, but she feared her child would be expelled because of her "complaint."

Feeling Prostituted

A Jamaican woman sang as a child in a deaf choir that traveled the United States to raise money for the mission school. "I felt like a prostitute," she said. "I signed hymns and Americans would cry because our signing was pretty. But they knew nothing about us, about Jamaica, about me. . . . They just felt sorry for us. But I wanted to see America, so [I] stayed in the choir."

Doubts About the Value of Formal Education

A deaf graduate of one of the schools said he was unable to find a job because his academic skills were poor:

I could read bits of the Bible, but I wasn't prepared to work when I graduated. When I went back to my village, no one knew sign language. I didn't fit in and I didn't really know my family. I was uncomfortable. I wonder if I [had] stayed home and not gone to the residential school if I would have fit in better, and then my father could have taught me how to farm. But he is dead now. It's too late. I don't belong there. I came back here [to an urban area].

This participant's comment shocked me—that he would consider no formal education over an informal education.

Yet, many deaf women and men conveyed the same sentiment to me.

The Price of Nonconformance

At another mission school, the faculty and staff would gather with the deaf children each morning for prayers. Those children who had not yet accepted Jesus Christ as their savior were sent to another room away from their peers.

In order to receive social services, deaf people sometimes have no choice but to accept what American missionaries have to offer, even if it compromises their integrity and disrespects their language. It does not have to be this way. In interviewing missionaries and observing their work, I am struck by their deep desire to help deaf people, and believe they would be saddened to learn of the negative effects of their proselytizing. I believe that missionaries do want what is best for Deaf communities, and are not only interested in recruiting Christians but in helping them to be independent, mature citizens. I suggest that mission groups consider implementing the factors of effectiveness described in the present article as a way of achieving their goals.

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