



# Jamaican Geographer

Newsletter of the Jamaican Geographical Society

ISSN 1017-4753

## GLOBAL ISSUES, LOCAL IMPACT

### Scale: A Geographical Concept to Understand Local and Global Challenges

Erik Swyngedouw and Nik Heynen provide a vivid description of the way in which the global and the local come together in particular locations in this extract from a 2003 article in *Antipode*:

“In the summer of 1998, the Southeast Asian financial bubble imploded. Global capital moved spasmodically from place to place, leaving cities like Jakarta with a social and physical wasteland where dozens of unfinished skyscrapers are dotted over the landscape while thousands of unemployed children, women and men roam the streets in search of survival. In the meantime, El Niño’s global dynamics were wreaking havoc in the region with its climatic disturbances. Puddles of stagnant water in the defunct concrete buildings that had once promised continuing capital accumulation for Indonesia became breeding grounds and great ecological niches for mosquitoes. Malaria and dengue fever suddenly joined with unemployment and social and political mayhem in shaping Jakarta’s cityscape. Global capital fused with global climate, with local power struggles and with socioecological conditions to reshape Jakarta’s urban socioecological conditions in profound, radical and deeply troubling ways. This example suggests how cities are dense networks of interwoven sociospatial processes that are simultaneously local and global, human and physical, cultural and organic.”

*Swyngedouw E, Heynen C (2003) Urban Political Ecology, Justice and the Politics of Scale. Antipode 35(5): 898-918*

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen, at which a new agreement governing national carbon emissions will be decided, which will take effect once the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. But at the same time, climate change will affect both global climatic systems (changes in average temperature, precipitation, and weather patterns) whilst having a direct effect on the lives of millions of individuals, particularly those living in low - and middle-income countries. Climate change adaptation – managing the unavoidable consequences of climate change – also requires action at a variety of scales, from new global funding structures (including the recently created Adaptation Fund), national frameworks (such as the National Adaptation Programmes of Action prepared by the world’s Least Developed Countries), regional and urban interventions (including the construction and modification of coastal defences) – but also individual and household responses such as the construction of houses on stilts in flood-prone areas. In the Sahel, drought-prone communities have developed innovative measures to increase infiltration (Figure 1) and thereby increase their resilience to climate change and representing a very

*(Continued on page 3)*

What does it mean to say something is “local” or “global”? This question is at the heart of geography as a discipline. Indeed, the very name of the subject refers to “writing about the world”. Alongside an increasing awareness of the process of globalisation, there is also growing recognition that it is increasingly difficult to separate events occurring in one location from activities elsewhere on the globe.

Thinking about issues of scale can help geographers, as well as other social and environmental scientists, to understand some of the major challenges facing global environments, economies and societies today. An awareness of scale can provide a conceptual framework for assessing and addressing two major challenges: climate change and the provision of low-income housing. While the first is usually framed as a global issue, it nonetheless has a substantial local component. Simultaneously, the second is often seen as being local, yet the most effective strategies require coordinated global action.

#### “Global” Climate Change

Although the term climate change is often used synonymously with global environmental change, both the causes of and responses to climate change involve a complex set of issues occurring at a variety

of scales. The development of a capitalist economy dependent on the industrial use of fossil fuels in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries simultaneously created new structures of social life and



*Infiltration channels, Thies Region, Senegal (Source: D. Dodman)*

work for millions of people. It also initiated previously unparalleled increases in the greenhouse gas emissions affecting atmospheric systems. Current efforts to reduce these emissions – climate change mitigation – require both everyday actions by individuals to reduce their “carbon footprints” and strong policies to enforce this at an international level. Nowhere is this more important than in the run-up to the 2009 meeting of the United Nations

#### Inside this Issue:

News from the Jamaican Geographical Society	2
News from the Department of Geography and Geology, UWI	2
Crisis is Where Global and Local Problems Meet	3
The Impact of the Global Energy Situation on Jamaica	4
Small Farming in an Era of Global Change and Uncertainty	4
The US Housing Crisis and Its Impact on Jamaica: An Overview	5
Jamaica for Sale?	6
Spaces of Hope	6
Are You A GeoGuru?	7

## News from the Jamaican Geographical Society

**Panel Discussion on CAPE Geography.** On Wednesday, September 24, 2008, the department hosted a panel discussion on the role of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) programme in Geography Education in the Caribbean. The presenters were: Mrs. Cherryl Stephens, Assistant Registrar (Syllabus), and Subject Officer responsible for CAPE Geography at the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC); Ms. Phyllis Jones, geography teacher at Meadowbrook High School; and Ms. Amanda McKenzie and Mr. Dorlan Burrell, undergraduate geography students, UWI. The JGS also presented the results of a survey it conducted to obtain the views of high school geography teachers and undergraduate students at the UWI. The Geography Association of Trinidad and Tobago (GATT) contributed to the discussion via a very relevant message delivered on its behalf, which largely echoed the views of the Jamaican teachers. A lively discussion followed these presentations. Many of the issues raised are likely to be considered by the examination body in its upcoming syllabus review exercise. Suggestions were also made for the adoption of approaches to help alleviate the shortage of academic resource material on the subject. The JGS expressed its intention to continue its involvement in the issue.

**Mount Rosser Bypass Field Trip.** Early in the morning of Saturday, November 29, 2008, 13 lucky souls set out to preview one



JGS members visit a highway construction site near Linstead. Photo: S. Ashby

of the most important developments in Jamaica's transportation infrastructure currently underway. In keeping with its policy of having open dialogue with stakeholders, Bouygues Travaux Publics graciously welcomed the JGS members and their guests to their offices for a safety briefing, before a tour of most of the 19km toll road being constructed from Linstead to Moneague as part of Highway 2000. Several stops were made along the route, where participants were given informative explanations of the geology of the area, and the engineering issues involved in the project. The social impact of the project was not neglected, with stops at Bubba Hill and another community near Faith's Pen, where the Bouygues representatives outlined the social projects the company has for addressing the impacts of the highway construction.

**Annual Christmas BBQ.** Saturday, December 6, 2008 marked another edition of this

successful event. Over a hundred persons turned out at the Department of Geography and Geology at the UWI to savour the succulent chicken and pork provided by caterers from Taylor Hall, UWI, as well as exceptional vegetable kebabs prepared by Nishaud Mohammed and his able team of undergraduates, and pasta salad by post-graduate JGS member, Joyelle Clarke. The menu was also enriched by cakes donated by Simply Delicious and Sugar & Spice. This time around there was more than enough food for everyone, and still the bar overflowed. The ambience was also enhanced by tunes spun by our "guest DJ" Roshad Balla. Who knew that Lab 3 could also be a dance floor? The party went on for hours. The event promises to be bigger and better next year. Mark your calendars!

Soyini Ashby & Robert Kinlocke, JGS Council members



S. Ganapathy (L) and D. Barker (R) enjoy the fun at the Annual JGS BBQ. Photo: S. Kadir

## News from the Department of Geography and Geology, UWI

**The Conference.** Summer 2008 was more eventful than most, as the department hosted a conference in celebration of the University's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The conference, entitled 'Foundations and Directions: celebrating geography and geology at The University of the West Indies' took place from July 7-11, 2008, and was a tremendous success, with an eclectic selection of participants. Papers were delivered by fledgling and experienced academics as well as professionals in various sub-disciplines of geography and geology. Participants were taken on a field trip to view the construction of the Mount Rosser Bypass for Highway 2000. The JGS collaborated with the Geological Society of Jamaica (GSJ) to host a "Reunion Night" for Department alumni during the conference.

**Population Change.** The semester commenced with the addition of four new post graduates to the department: Theresa Rodriguez, Candice York, Tanesha Edwards and Shiva Mohan. The department also witnessed the formal departure of now former postgraduates Sherene James and Ryan

Ramsook at the graduation ceremony held in November. The Department of Geography and Geology was the most highly represented at this year's ceremony in terms of the number of graduating PhD candidates.

Ms. Nadine Sherlock-Marshall embarked on a three month vacation leave and was ably replaced by Ms Denise Francis. Dr Balfour Spence also departed to occupy a temporary post at Brandon University in Manitoba,



Students "converge" on the DoGG parking lot. Photo: S. Kadir

Canada. Dr Spence has served the department for over a decade and has made significant strides in bridging the academic and policy gap in disaster management.

In October, Professor Simon Mitchell delivered his inaugural lecture, to formalise his appointment as Professor of Sedimentary Geology. Prof. Mitchell came to the UWI as an already accomplished academic in 1996, and since then has had an admirable publication record.

**Social Space.** A small but well managed budget coupled with a week of intense planning, resulted in the emergence of "Convergence" – a mid-day social, hosted by the JGS, the UWI Geographical Society and the Mona Chapter of the Geological Society of Jamaica, to welcome the new batch of first year students in the Department. The lure of free food and good music was more than enough to encourage the convergence of patrons, many of whom were beyond the targeted year group. Members of other Departments turned out as well. This is to become an annual event.

Robert Kinlocke & Soyini Ashby, JGS

## Crisis is Where Global and Local Problems Meet

A local society might be able to cushion itself from a global problem, and the global system might be unaffected by a local disaster. But when both meet and reinforce each other, we have the basis for a crisis. Take, for example, the environment. UWI Professor Gerald Lalor was recently reported as saying that a 10m rise in sea levels will change Jamaica as we know it. The Palisadoes would disappear, Kingston Harbour would become open sea and the waterfront would move uptown. Offshore cays would disappear and wetlands and farms would be flooded.

This is not just alarming to the environmental scientist but to the social scientist as well. The implications for demographic changes, economic systems and health should arouse the social scientist. Thankfully, economists of development such as Professor Norman Girvan have tried to raise awareness of the issues for development since 1991.

If Professor Lalor points today to the global consequences of global warming, Professor Girvan pointed back then to the local consequences of Jamaica's model of industrialisation without conservation. Intensive natural resource exploitation has led to an increased rate of resource depletion in the process of material accumulation by companies in bauxite, tourism and petroleum



Disturbed land: the "red mud" at Ewarton Works. Photo: S. Ashby

operating in the Caribbean. The Caribbean is extremely environmentally sensitive.

It is reported in the publication *Caribbean Ecology and Economics* [N. Girvan and D. Simmonds (editors), 1991] that the result of this process of industrialization is that between 1952 and 1989 bauxite mining in Jamaica disturbed 62,735 acres of land, and alumina processing generated 50 million tons of solid bauxite waste and 200 million tons of caustic red mud. In the brief period of 1981 to 1990, 400 million tons of soil was lost from watersheds. In roughly 30 years up to 1989, rainfall declined by 28%; and between 1947 and 1989, temperatures warmed by 2.3 degrees centigrade, due in part to global warming and to local

deforestation and desertification. Between 1981 and 1990 the annual rate of deforestation was 3.3%, while 409,000 tons of carbon dioxide were emitted into the atmosphere each year, contributing "substantially" to the greenhouse effect. Between 1950 and 1989, Jamaica lost about 50 rivers. Virtually all manufacturing and processing plants released toxic wastes.

Jamaica has contributed to its own environmental crisis. But out of this new form of development thinking came the appreciation that new national accounting has to calculate GDP against the depletion of non-renewable resources. A more concrete result was Environmental Impact Assessments for investment projects and the establishment of a national environmental protection agency.

Both Professors and Girvan agree that the problem is so great that it needs an interdisciplinary approach. It seems to make sense that if crisis arises when the global and local meet then the solutions must come from a meeting of our disciplines. From this we would expect to have the right policy, institutions and people in place to make the solutions work.

*Robert Buddan, Lecturer in Caribbean Politics and Democracy, Department of Government, UWI-Mona.*

## Scale: A Geographical Concept to Understand Local and Global Challenges (cont'd)

*(Continued from page 1)*

local response to a very global problem.

### "Local" Improvements to Low-Income Housing

One of the most frequently-cited statistics of recent years is the transition to a world in which half the global population live in urban areas. What is less frequently stated is that around one-third of this group – or about a billion men, women and children – live in slums with inadequate housing and sanitation. The improvement of the living conditions of these individuals and households is often seen as requiring local action, and this is indeed true. However, practitioners in this field often describe their strongest challenge as being "going to scale" – or identifying effective ways of dealing with the massive pent-up demand for decent housing.

"Going to scale" requires at least two different interventions. The first is identifying adequate sources of financing –



Housing constructed by the Philippines Homeless People's Federation, Iloilo City, Philippines. Photo: D. Dodman

whether this is in the form of official development assistance, charitable foundations, or the incomes of the urban poor themselves – to build the number of houses required. A second aspect of "going to scale" requires the construction of global

networks of the urban poor who are able to share their experiences and negotiate more effectively for changes in global and national institutions. The Philippines Federation for Homeless People (Figure 2) is one such national organisation that seeks to build houses for low-income groups within its own nation, yet works with similar groups throughout Asia and Africa to effect change at the global scale.

Geographers are particularly well placed to understand the intertwining and co-dependent nature of global and local processes. Alongside place and space, scale is one of the key concepts that enables this enquiry. But perhaps more importantly, this awareness can lead to practical interventions that build more effective and sustainable solutions to many of the problems facing the world today.

*David Dodman, PhD, Researcher, Human Settlements/Climate Change, International Institute for Environment and Development*

## The Impact of the Global Energy Situation on Jamaica

Energy is one of the most important inputs enabling economic growth. The cost of energy over the past two years has been particularly volatile, fluctuating wildly from a high of US\$147 per barrel in July 2008 to less than US\$55 a barrel in November 2008. Jamaica will spend nearly US\$3 billion on imported oil in 2008. This will amount to about 110% of the value of merchandise exported for the year and will be over 20% of GDP. Although price fluctuations have been large, the price of oil has reached new thresholds and the era of cheap oil has passed.

Furthermore, oil is not an infinite resource and its production is about to peak. Some analysts expect that this peak will occur around the year 2015, after which there will be a gradual depletion in production, and oil will only remain the principle fuel for another 45 years. However, there is still no replacement for oil in the transportation sector because natural gas is not as versatile in use, and fuel cell technology is still two decades away from universal commerciality. For these reasons, oil will continue to fetch relatively high prices.

The global economy is presently undergoing the makings of a recession. This will have a ripple effect on the Jamaican economy, affecting most notably the tourism industry, remittances from the Jamaican diaspora, and export marketing activities. Jamaica presently uses oil as a primary fuel; conse-

quently, it will need to diversify its energy mix. To do so, Jamaica will have to introduce other fuel types such as coal and natural gas. In the meantime, potential indigenous energy sources are primarily renewable sources such as wind, hydro-power and solar. Jamaica will need to maximize in the fastest time possible, the use of these renewable resources. It will also need to expand the use of biofuels and utilise waste-to-energy projects.

Fledgling technologies such as wave power and ocean thermal energy are also future potential energy sources. Over the long term, 2025 and beyond, the nuclear option may present itself. Although nuclear power is not a renewable resource it is considered to be a source of clean energy. Notwithstanding potential problems of radioactive waste disposal, a new generation of fission energy is predicated on the commercial arrival of small pebble bed nuclear reactors. Pebble bed reactors are expected to become available at some point between 2020 and 2025. They would be economically viable in the size range of 70-200 megawatts (MW) and would be suitable as a least cost economic option for many developing countries, including Jamaica.

Jamaica also needs to embrace energy conservation and efficiency as the cultural mantra of civil society in a similar fashion to that of Japan and Singapore. Energy efficiency is required in every aspect of energy

use including households, commercial activities, the hospitality industry, manufacturing, and the transportation sector. In households, the first step is to use compact fluorescent lamps for lighting and as a replacement for all incandescent units. This replacement would save between 30 and 40 megawatts of electricity if done in totality. Reasonable market penetration will result in a saving of about 22 MW.

Transportation requires significant attention. It is important to discourage the use of high powered vehicles which are quite unnecessary given the Jamaican road system and travel destinations. Thus, there should be an import tariff structure that favours engines less than 200cc, as well as hybrid vehicles, diesel vehicles and ultimately flexible-fuel (flexi) vehicles that can run on varying proportions of gasoline and ethanol.

It is likely that a diversified portfolio of energy resources will be needed in order to provide sustainability, security, and economic stability. Energy will continue to be a sensitive parameter in our economic planning as it is essential to productivity and an acceptable standard of living. The purchase and use of energy is not discretionary, and cannot be completely avoided; therefore, being energy deficient is among Jamaica's foremost challenges in a globalised economic framework.

*Raymond M. Wright, Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica*

## Small Farming in an Era of Global Change and Uncertainty

Food security and domestic food production in Jamaica has been of concern for many years but the rapid escalation of oil and food prices in the global economy has brought these concerns sharply into focus in 2008. The global food crisis of 2007-2008 has witnessed an overall 40% increase in food prices, numerous food riots and more countries restricting food export as a way to safeguard their supplies; leaving import-dependent countries in a panic. Locally, the absolute incapacitation of state efforts toward small agriculture since the 1970s has resulted in a decline in domestic food production and an increased dependence on food imports. The availability of food has become more insecure — less land is under cultivation and more and more food is being imported for local consumption. This is in striking contrast to the “good old days” of farming. As one farmer put it,

*“Back then [when farming was good] almost everyone was involved in farming...the entire area was under cultivation- crops as far as eyes could see. We could hardly get guinea grass buy to mulch our farms...we did not have to worry about market as everything was taken care of by the AMC [Agriculture Marketing Corporation]...the government cared about farming and farmers were happy. I bought my land built my house from farming. Today all of that has changed! The government no longer cares about farming or farmers. Look around you...all you will see is guinea grass...the politics of this country is worse than any [natural] disaster we could ever experience...farming these days is like trying to wipe ice dry. But we can't stop...it is the only thing we know... farming is in our blood’.*

farming in modern Jamaica "is like trying to wipe ice dry" (see box).

Coupled with these changes, Jamaica has also been hit by a number of extreme weather events. In the years 2002-2007, the island witnessed the greatest damage to the sector, with the passage of hurricanes Charley and Ivan (in 2004), followed by a seven-month drought (late 2004 into 2005) (coupled with spells of bush fires), and then by the effects of Tropical Storm Wilma, and hurricanes Dennis and Emily. The years 2003 and 2006 were relatively ‘quiet,’ but storm activity returned in 2007 and 2008 with the passage of Hurricane Dean and Tropical Storm Gustav respectively. These events significantly disrupted livelihood activities for many small farmers in the country.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## The US Housing Crisis and Its Impact on Jamaica: An Overview

Many countries, such as the United States, have mortgage loan institutions that are either categorised as prime lenders or sub-prime lenders. Prime Mortgage Lenders are mainstream financial institutions, such as banks. Sub-Prime Mortgage Lenders extend credit at higher interest rates than the prime market, to high-risk individuals with lower credit scores, higher debt-to-income ratios, and higher combined loan to value ratios. Sub-prime borrowers do not have access to the credit market through mainstream institutions due to poor credit histories and adverse financial situations. A subprime loan is offered at a rate higher than prime loans due to the perceived increased risk.

The United States housing market experienced a boom from 2001 to 2002 characterised by a rapid increase in the valuations of real property until unsustainable levels were attained in 2005 relative to incomes. This, in turn, over the period late 2006 to present, caused a decrease in home prices which resulted in many owners holding negative equity – a mortgage debt higher than the value of the property, leading to increased foreclosure rates particularly by subprime market borrowers. This period of 'bust' is familiarly known as the United States housing crisis. Real estate markets in the United Kingdom and Germany are also experiencing similar housing crises.

The housing crisis is tied to the general credit crunch and recession of the United States markets. In the sub-prime market in particular, the impact of increasing property value between 2001 and 2002 allowed people to reduce their monthly mortgage payments with lower interest rates and withdraw equity from their homes as values



Sample unit at the National Housing Trust (NHT) scheme in Waterworks, Westmoreland. Source: <http://www.golocaljamaica.com>

increased. This resulted in high rates of consumer spending derived from home refinancing. By 2006 stagnant wages and the increase in credit debt of households, resulted in several households defaulting on their mortgage loans and increased foreclosures. Interest rates were increased as lending risk rose, leading to reduced demand and causing a downturn in house prices. Such problems which began in the subprime markets started to spread to prime mortgage markets. Further panic in the housing market due to increased foreclosures and rapid devaluation of properties resulted in several credit companies being unable to recover and therefore forced to declare bankruptcy.

Jamaica's mortgage market is far more regulated than the open market system of the US, therefore a housing crisis of such nature is unlikely to occur. The National Housing TRUST (NHT), which is ultimately regulated by the Office of the Prime Minister, is not only Jamaica's largest prime mort-

gage lender, but the largest lender to the riskier sections of Jamaica's society. The continuous flow of funds to NHT, which is based on compulsory contributions from employers 3% and employees (2%), coupled with continuous monitoring of interest rates and returns on interim financing of private developers and prime mortgage borrowers, mean that the probability of a crisis in Jamaica's housing market is almost nill.

The United States housing crisis however, will impact on the local economy in other ways, albeit more indirectly, as the housing crisis is tied to a greater US and global market recession. A recession of world markets will result in international monetary agencies tightening conditions of loans and reducing the number of loans, and their amounts to developing countries, such as Jamaica. We are dependent on such assistance for socio-economic development, including the improvement and continuous expansion of the housing stock.

Also, Jamaica has large diasporic communities not only in the United States but also in the UK. The recession of global markets, which is associated with job loss, reduced consumer spending, and the devaluation of the US dollar (as we have seen recently), means that there will be a decrease in remittances (on which many households depend) to Jamaica. This, coupled with the recent downturn in the unregulated, alternative investment schemes in which many Jamaicans have interest, will result in a continuous slowing in local consumer spending and a further slowing down of the Jamaican economy.

*Seema Kadir, Membership Secretary, JGS*

## Small Farming in an Era of Global Change and Uncertainty (cont'd)

*(Continued from page 4)*

The last decade or so has been characterised by unprecedented global environment and economic changes, heightened uncertainty, and increased vulnerability and food insecurity. Locally, the agricultural sector has received a number of environmental and economic shocks which has resulted in a further marginalisation of the livelihoods of many small farmers. In light of the importance of agriculture to rural livelihoods and

the Jamaican economy, considerable attention should be given to the sector in order to reduce its vulnerability to global change. These farmers are dependent on a sector that is extremely sensitive to shocks and stresses and this has serious implications for food security at all levels within the country.

*Donovan Campbell, Postgraduate Student, DoGG, UWI*

Right: A St. Elizabeth farmer creating potato hills.  
Photo: D. Campbell



## Jamaica for Sale?

Tourism may be considered as sugar's contemporary archetype. While our colonial history was hinged on the cultivation of sugar cane our present is characterised by the planting of large scale hotels, most recently the Spanish mega-hotels. Here, a culture of exclusion, marginalisation and environmental contempt is cultivated.

On Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, the documentary, "Jamaica for Sale" was broadcast and it highlighted several issues relating to recent trends in the tourism industry. For the first time, Jamaica was able to witness the collective repercussions imposed by tourism in a graphic and explicit way from the arguably biased lens of the producers. There were particularly striking issues that surfaced in that production. Firstly, while it must be acknowledged that tourism has contributed to, at the very least, a reduction in unemployment, the quality of employment conditions is aligned more closely with slavery than that which typifies modern work environments. The experiences of workers epitomizes a rejection of ethics and consideration for safety as many are forced to work without adequate safety gear. Repeated structural failures during the construction phase of certain Spanish hotels has caused severe injuries, and even death in a few instances. Compounding these concerns are the inadequate wages and long work hours imposed by the Spanish subjugators. The lack of job security emerging from the intense competition from a large pool of the unemployed and, the associated likelihood of replacement, ensured the sustainability of a labour force virtually bonded by the need for income and the fear of dispensability. While this is not

the case in all instances, it was a relatively pervasive problem amongst some of the most recent developments.

Secondly, environmental degradation featured as perhaps the most salient aspect of this unbalanced compromise. Their documentary showed footage of irreversible damage to marine and coastal ecosystems. Poorly managed waste disposal systems in addition to extensive deforestation of mangrove forests represent only a minute fraction of the many ways in which the environmental modification imposed by this invasion reflects the blatant disregard for sustainability of the local environment. This, in turn, has implications for the sustainability of the tourism industry. When the environmental dilemma is situated in the context of political will and legal enforcement, the prospects of sustainability become even more dismal. The common practice of pre-approval and post-construction Environmental Impact Assessments is only one of the many questionable circumstances surrounding the development of a few of these tourism mega-structures.

Despite its vulnerability to external shocks such as 9-11, Jamaica's tourism industry has demonstrated comparative resilience and continues to grow. But this expansion in volume is paralleled by an increasing homogeneity at the local and global scale as the global market for mass tourism becomes exposed to a product which is increasingly similar. All the major Caribbean, Latin American and Pacific destinations now offer versions of the all-inclusive package against the backdrop of a tropical climate and beautiful beaches. This may eventually compromise the buoyancy of the industry as alternative destinations provide similar appeal.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the extensive concretization of the north and west coast does have economic and social benefits. The multiplier economic effects of the industry, as well as the sense of empowerment created by increased access to jobs, indicate that a pragmatic approach to development may be situated in continued investment in the industry. However, the nation as the most important stakeholder must ensure that this industry is properly managed. Ideally, principles of environmental sustainability must reside at the core of effective management.

As young environmentalists we are saddened by the rate of growth, the scale of these developments and the negative implications they have for Jamaica's natural environment. To be fair, other large scale hotel developments have taken place over the last two decades, with chains such as Sandals and Ritz Carlton. And they have all impacted the environment negatively and to various extents. However, the magnitude of the newly established chain of Spanish Hotels is of much concern and the fact that our government allows these developments to occur at such a rapid pace despite the implications of their comparative size is bewildering. It causes us to question the relevance of the term sustainable development. This documentary has instigated public concern but we await the response of the government to the issues highlighted.



Robert Kinlocke, Jamaica Youth Environmental Corps (JYEC)

## Spaces of Hope

To many people, Father Gregory is known as 'the man who turned his back on riches to help the poor.' Born into a Hindu family in San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago, Father Gregory has grown to devote his life to working for the Lord as a Roman Catholic priest with a heart filled with a desire to reach out and help the needy and the vulnerable within society.

His life is not only devoted to helping people, but there is more geographical interest than one could imagine. Father Gregory came to the department of Geography and Geology at the University of the West Indies, Mona in 1972. It was here that his tertiary academic journey in geography began, with an interest in physical planning. One thing he notes with much exuberance is the



Fr. Gregory Ramkissoon with local children during a visit to Zimbabwe in 2005.

Source: <http://www.mustardseed.com>

impact that the department and the discipline of Geography had on him. He gives credit to the fact that he gained a philosophical view of space where he became more aware of the various interactions and organisational patterns and processes that occur at the local and global levels.

Interestingly, it was during the 1970's that his vision for the development of the Mustard Seed project took form. Already a part of service projects within the community of Mona Commons, the project began there in 1978 with him being the founder and executive director of the Mustard Seed Communities. This project provides a sanctuary which is home to children who are abandoned, disabled, mentally challenged and

(Continued on page 7)

## Are you a GeoGuru?

	n	o	d	e	r	
			*			
<b>(Grenada)</b>						
	q	a	u	b	i	e
					*	
<b>(Grenadines)</b>						
	d	o	e	d	a	r
			*			
<b>(Antigua and Barbuda)</b>						
b	o	s	m	e	r	r
*						
<b>(Anguilla)</b>						
	r	a	e	a	c	r
						*
<b>(Republic of Trinidad and Tobago)</b>						
	b	a	a	s		
	*					
<b>(Netherlands Antilles)</b>						
	r	o	t	a	l	t
					*	
<b>(British Virgin Islands)</b>						



Want to know where this is? Unscramble number 6.  
Source: <http://www.desmic.com>

## GeoJumble

Enter one letter in each box to unscramble the words. Then, unscramble the letters from the starred boxes to complete the phrase below. The country beneath each scramble provides a clue for each word.

*These are some interesting, very small \_\_\_\_\_ in the Caribbean.*      \* \* \* \* \*

Jumbles: Ronde, Beguia, Carrera, Saba,  
Tortola  
Answer: These are some interesting, very small islands in the  
Caribbean

## Spaces of Hope (cont'd)

*(Continued from page 6)*

infected by HIV/AIDS.

The project currently operates in 16 locations in vulnerable communities across Jamaica, with additions in countries such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, the United States, England, the Netherlands and Ireland.

He returned to the UWI in 1982 where he lectured in physical planning geography for three consecutive years. Amongst other significant contributions during his tenure, he will be remembered as being the first, and so far, the only lecturer in the department who has organised an overseas field trip, taking his students to Miami as part of a course called the Geography of Developed Countries. On this trip students and lecturers went on a tour of downtown Miami with the assistance of Professor Thomas Boswell

from the Geography Department of the University of Miami. They also took a trip through the Everglades to look at conservation and water management practices in the area, with the assistance of Professor Granville Draper, a former geology post graduate student from the UWI, who is currently working at the Florida International University.

Father Gregory's work is diverse not only in study but in impact across the world. He holds post graduate degrees in philosophy and theology. He started the AIDS network in Zimbabwe, the local radio station, Roots FM, Jamaica, and he continues to work in areas relating to development issues and rural farming and distance teaching facilities, among other programs as well as a number of other outreach activities in various countries across the world.

His life demonstrates the relationship between theory and practice, between his studies in physical planning and his mission with the Mustard Seed Communities. It has allowed for a greater understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of geography, the movement of people, how a population reorganises itself based on the view that it has of itself. He encourages the undergraduate students in the department especially, to take their studies seriously; for geography allows us to understand the diversity of interactions and relationships within and among societies across the world. Therefore there is a need for persons with this knowledge to contribute to more effective and efficient planning and organisation for the development of their societies.

*Mellissa Raymond, JGS Council Member*

## Jamaican Geographer

Newsletter of the  
Jamaican Geographical Society  
c/o the Department of Geography and  
Geology

University of the West Indies  
Mona, Kingston 7  
Phone: 927-2129, 927-2728

Editor: Soyini Ashby

Editorial Committee:

Seema Kadir Robert Kinlocke  
Carlos Michel Mellissa Raymond  
Kevon Rhiney Jasmine Waite

### JGS Council Members, 2008-2009

David Barker	President
Kevon Rhiney	Vice President
Soyini Ashby	Secretary
Savitha Ganapathy	Treasurer
Seema Kadir	Membership Secretary
Lenny Wallace	Communications Officer
Jasmine Waite	Assistant Secretary
Carlos Michel	Asst. Membership Secretary



Ordinary Council Members:

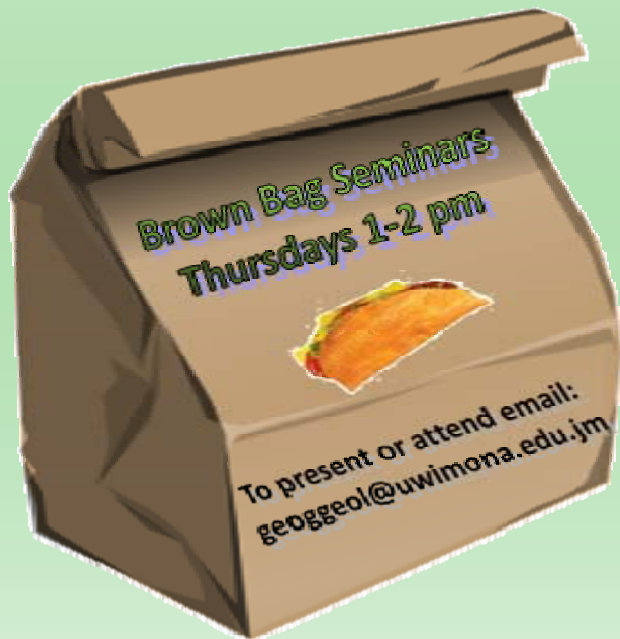
Donovan Campbell	Joyelle Clarke
Thera Edwards	Dorothy Hylton
Robert Kinlocke	Mellissa Raymond



*Be a part of the Jamaican Geographer!* ✍

Give us your comments and suggests on what you would like to see in up-coming issues, or write a letter to the editor on an issue that concerns you. Send your input to [Jamalcangeographer@gmail.com](mailto:Jamalcangeographer@gmail.com).

Look out for our next issue in **June 2009**.



JGS Members visit Bouygues Construction

### Interested in Becoming a JGS Member?

**Contact:**

**Seema Kadir – Membership Secretary**

**Email: [seema.kadir@uwimona.edu.jm](mailto:seema.kadir@uwimona.edu.jm)**

**Tel: 927-2129/927-2728**

#### 2008-2009 Membership Fees:

Professionals-J\$1,200	Overseas- US\$20
Students-J\$300	Corporate -J\$10,000

***Join now and enjoy reduced fees for trips and activities!***