

Diaspora Philanthropy: The Case of the Union of Jamaican Alumni Associations in New York City
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Abstract

Jamaica's labor migration has created a large migrant community, concentrated largely in New York, and a growing tradition of diaspora philanthropy. Through her research, Marlene Lewis examines the philanthropic practices of Jamaican alumni organizations, a significant subset of the social welfare organizations created in the Jamaican diaspora. These organizations (in the US and Canada) have consistently served Jamaica in the areas of disaster relief, health, education, and community development. Ms. Lewis's study focuses on three main areas of their operations: philanthropic practices, factors influencing their philanthropic practices, and the potential for expanding collaborative networks.

Ms Lewis's model is the Union of Jamaican Alumni Associations in New York, a fundraising and grantmaking collaborative that was created out of the recognition that small organizations are often not able to sustain an adequate flow of funds. Her paper shows how a small but committed group of alumni organizations can provide critical support to a highly undercapitalized nonprofit sector. These alumni organizations solicit their funding almost exclusively from within Jamaican and Caribbean communities. While maintaining the independence of the individual organizations, they have successfully collaborated as a distribution mechanism for Jamaican diaspora funds.

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