

## **Spiritual Affairs & Outreach**

### **(O)      *An Examination of the Underlying Factors Associated with Clients at a Community Counselling Centre: Implications for Counselling***

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The Jamaican social fabric is slowly deteriorating. Presently, eighty five percent of Jamaican children are born out of wedlock and living in single parent households (Jamaica Gleaner, 2008), with forty five percent of its homes being headed by women (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2002). As a result, many of the nation's children are fatherless and are exhibiting behavioural problems and other social disorders. Because of lack of adequate parental guidance, high illiteracy rate, and lack of financial sustainability, many Jamaican households are faced with serious moral and social decay.

The parish of Manchester is not immune to the apathy that the rest of the Jamaican society is exposed to. Northern Caribbean University, since 2003, in its role as a responsible corporate citizen has proactively formed a relationship with two governmental agencies, namely: the Victim Support Unit (VSU) and the Centre for Investigation against Sexual Offences and Child Abuse (CISOCA) to create the Community Counselling and Restorative Justice Centre (CCRJC) to help stymie the tide of Jamaica's rapidly deteriorating society.

In a quest to determine if the centre has been able to effect change within Manchester and its environs; the researcher has analyzed the files and intake forms of all its active cases between January 2009 and January 2010. This analysis provides an examination of the underlying factors associated with clients who come to the centre; the approaches used to deal with their cases; and the strategies employed in order to curtail or minimize the preponderance of related cases in the geographical area.

Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were used to reveal significant differences in the type of cases referred the gender and socio-economic background of the clients; as well as the reason for referrals.

It was recommended that the centre should implement its three-pronged approach of prevention, intervention and employment restorative justice practices in order to stymie the rapid social problems that Jamaica is faced with. Additionally the centre will seek to develop satellite counselling centres, as well as foster greater collaboration between community stakeholders and academic departments at NCU.