



## WE-Change Annual Report 2018

WE-Change is a community-based advocacy organisation that was established out of a need to strengthen the women's movement in Jamaica and advocacy around issues pertaining to lesbian, bisexual and transgender<sup>1</sup> women.

WE-Change operates under four strategic objectives.

1. Increase the participation of LBT women in social justice advocacy in Jamaica and the Caribbean.
2. Create safe, alternative spaces for LBT women.
3. Address and reduce homophobia and transphobia among duty bearers and caregivers
4. Promote gender equality towards the elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls

WE-Change envisions a society where the rights of every person are recognised, respected and protected.

### **WE-Change Management Team**

WE-Change is managed by an executive team and supported by our technical advisors on a needs basis.

Nadeen Spence - Technical Director

Nicolette Bryan - Executive Director

Paige Andrew - Director of Regional Integration and Research

Shawna Stewart - Director of Programmes and Training

Teadra Morris - Communications Officer

Kristina Neil - Social Media Coordinator

Raihn McNish - Gender & Research Officer

Christina Grant - Director of Community Engagement and Compliance

Shantae Porteous - Events Coordinator

Charlene Wright - Admin and Procurement Officer

Shennie Finlayson - Advocacy Officer

Shaneka Hall - Youth and Outreach Officer

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<sup>1</sup> In 2020, the organisation took the decision to change our focus to working with and for LBQ women as there are other impactful organisations working with trans women who are better equipped to do so.



## Summary

In 2018 WE were able to accomplish the large majority of the work designated in our annual work plan. Much focus was put on new projects and opportunities which we decided to tackle as a young, dynamic organisation. We welcomed new members of the Executive to the team in an effort to strengthen our online presence, event impact and community engagement and have invested much in building the capacity of our Ambassadors. WE staged fairly successful flagship events namely #HerLegacy, VAW Awareness Walk and Orange Lights. We have also provided ample opportunity for women around Jamaica to increase their civic engagement and volunteerism in safe spaces during the year through participating in beach cleanups, 5k charity runs, toiletry drives, and engagement with others through our Day of Care held at the Mary's Child Home for Pregnant and Teen mothers in May.

This year, much focus was also put on internal strengthening which saw the registration of WE as a limited company, the opening of our bank account and the forging of a number of mutually beneficial partnerships with organizations such as ILGA and the Embassy of the United States of America. Changes in our Executive led to a noticeable gap in our advocacy work in 2018. We have used this as a lesson regarding building the capacity of members in portfolios outside of their purview. Once this is done, other Executive members will have the ability to assist with portfolios which may be temporarily vacant.

Going into 2019, WE will take on new projects which will allow us to build and maintain partnerships with regional organisations, continue to build the capacity of LBT women, and provide safe alternative social activities and spaces. Our social media still acts as our main resource for increasing awareness among the general public on the role of women in sustainable development in the Caribbean. This is also done through media appearances and presentations at workshops. WE hope to increase our advocacy, strategic visibility and engagement in 2019 as we continue to facilitate the empowerment of women and contribute to the regional social justice landscape.

## Main Activities 2018

### Social Economic Justice Program

The WE-Change Social and Economic Justice (SEJ) Training Program is a yearly initiative geared towards the education and capacity building of lesbian, bisexual, transgender women and allies to foster increased participation in social and economic justice advocacy in ways that will positively impact the quality of lives of local gender and sexual minorities. The fourth staging of the SEJ took



place in Kingston, Jamaica from August 8 - 10, 2018. Sixteen LBT and ally women were trained. While the programme was held in the capital, considerations were taken to ensure involvement and engagement from women in rural Jamaica. The added focus on economic justice is to promote economic opportunities for women in conjunction with the social and political changes required to claim equitable rights for women and improve their overall well-being. The training report can be found [here](#).

### Ambassador Programme

The WE-Change Ambassador Programme was launched in March 2018 with the aim of expanding our rural work and lessening the workload of the management team. It was also our intention to build the capacity of LBT and ally women in Jamaica with interest in social justice advocacy. We were able to recruit and engage eight Ambassadors who have undergone a series of training programmes on topics ranging from human rights, gender and sexual diversity and intimate partner violence conducted by Executive members of WE-Change to economic empowerment, IDAHOT activities and online safety for women conducted by external organisations. They have also represented the organisation at various capacity building and community outreach initiatives such as our Day of Service and assisted with reporting and engagement at events. It is our intention to continue building the capacity of these LBT women to represent WE-Change at events, implement programmes to reach key stakeholders and women, engage with influential stakeholders, conduct training sessions outside of Kingston and the metropolitan area and contribute to the overall development of the organisation. See [photo](#) of the first group of our Ambassadors at their orientation in March 2018, during a [workshop](#) on the Jamaica Stock Exchange, [engagement](#) during our Earth Day social media efforts.

### #HerLegacy

The third staging of #HerLegacy was held under the theme for the International Women's Day 2018 - *"The Time Is Now: Rural and Urban Activists Transforming Women's Lives"*. The aim of the event was to highlight the works of local, urban and rural women activists who have been working to change the way women's issues are addressed and represented with hopes of changing laws and enacting policies to safeguard the rights of women and girls. The main focus of the event was the showing of the #HerLegacy Project videos that highlighted the work of four local women's rights activists. The women shared personal stories of triumph and challenges they faced in their years of activism locally and internationally. The women gave advice to young feminist activists in their interviews. The conversations that followed the videos were fittingly appropriate and stirred emotions in the women who were present. At the end of the evening it was recommended that WE share the video with other Jamaicans considering there isn't much recorded information about the women's movement in Jamaica. The event saw approximately fifty (50) persons in attendance. The audience included representatives from local human rights organizations, women's rights advocates and representatives from the University community. WE were also able to engage persons on social



media and the video was shared during a 51% Coalition (local feminist organisation) meeting in April 2018. The videos created for the event can be viewed by clicking the links below:

<https://goo.gl/KLrkGQ>

<https://goo.gl/brXm9U>

### Deaf Women Can Conference and Campaign

*Deaf Women Can* was a weeklong social media campaign which culminated with a conference. The campaign aimed to spread awareness about the Jamaican Deaf Community and Jamaican Sign Language (JSL) while the conference aimed to engage and share knowledge with Deaf LBT women, the children of Deaf adults (CODA) and Deaf allies. Intersectional feminism is central to the work WE do and we strive to ensure our advocacy is inclusive. WE are cognizant of the fact that Deaf women are impacted by a number of issues WE seek to improve, and WE are also aware of the importance of conversations and meaningful engagements as a part of the process of working with Deaf women. WE want to ensure that our projects are inclusive, WE want to ensure that Deaf women are in fact being heard. Both the campaign and conference were well received by the target audience and others. Sixty women attended the conference - the majority of these women were from the Deaf community. Over 400 people tuned in to the Facebook live of the event which can be viewed [here](#). See examples of material used during the campaign here :

<https://goo.gl/sEgLKo>

<https://goo.gl/KweQK>

### Funding

We received additional funding this year through the Astraea grant, a small grant from Jamaica National bank and an increase in the number of activities that have been funded by FiWi Jamaica – a USAID-funded Jamaican project. We have been able to implement most of our planned activities for the year.

### Looking Forward – 2019

In the next year, WE will focus on increasing the capacity building of our Executive in pertinent areas to ensure they are able to represent the organisation in different capacities from media engagement, presentations during trainings and workshops and government and civil society engagement. We will also continue to increase engagement with influential partners who share mutual interest such as the Institute of Gender and Development Studies, Regional Coordinating Office, UWI, Mona to assist with further partnership building and advance our knowledge and understanding of issues surrounding gender, research and sustainable development.



## **Main Activities – 2019**

- Continued implementation of the current Social and Economic Justice Programme and training a new cohort in the same programme.
- Expand the WE-Change Ambassador Programme to expand our work and reach in rural Jamaica
- Implement a Feminism Literacy Social Media video series to be shared extensively locally and regionally.
- Implement a three-month programme for LBT women and allies to build their capacity in political activism and corporate dialogue and lobbying
- Host a series of events to bring 300 people together to observe the 16 Days of activism to end GBV
- Submit issue briefs to parliamentarians on issues affecting women and girls and LBT women and provide capacity support to parliamentarians
- Consistently provide care packages monthly, for women in institutional care and women who are homeless
- Launch WE-Change's blog on our new website - ensure issues presented are intersectional, inclusive and relevant.

## **Resources and Capacity**

In addition to grant applications, we have received funding commitment for a few key activities from the United States Embassy in Jamaica which will be funding our Entrepreneurship Workshop for LBT women. We will be engaging Jamaica National Building Society towards supporting some of our main activities. Our outreach activities will be supported by collecting donations at some of our main events and we are hoping to receive funding from Astraea to cover the cost of some of our initiatives. We are also hoping to launch our social enterprise as a means of generating income for organizational sustainability. The executive team will also benefit from a group health insurance package, starting January 2019 as a first step towards creating a compensation package.