



## MIXED METHODS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION – CARIBBEAN CHAPTER

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### President’s Report on the Activities of the Mixed Methods International Research Association – Caribbean Chapter [MMIRA-CC] for the Period January 2020 – June 2021

I took on the role of President of the MMIRA-CC in January of 2020. On taking up the mantle as President, my primary objectives were to: i) ensure continued growth and visibility of the MMIRA-CC, ii) finalize the status of members in the organization, iii) regularize our operational procedures at the committee level, iv) ensure that we were in good standing with the Companies Office of Jamaica, and v) ensure that the MMIRA-CC was tax compliant in keeping with the Tax Administration of Jamaica’s regulations. In keeping with these objectives, the following section provides a report on the events that were executed, the status of the membership, company and tax matters, and a summary of income and expenditure for the period.

#### Events and Activities

##### MMIRA Global Webinar

On July 22, 2020, a group from the MMIRA-CC – Dr Loraine Cook, Dr Vimala Kamolodeen, Dr Tashane Haynes-Brown and Ms Leemoy Weaver - presented at the MMIRA Global Webinar Series. The title of the presentation was “The Development of the MMIRA-CC”. The presentation was well received.

##### MMIRA-CC Digital lunch hour

The Digital Lunch hour was a social event led by Dr Devonish and her team. This event provided members with an opportunity to get to know each other. Twenty-one (21) participants attended the event virtually from the three (3) UWI Campuses. Though we were hoping more persons would have taken the opportunity to attend, it was a rewarding and meaningful session. The feedback was very positive, as one participant expressed:

It was very engaging and audience guessed and laughed as they participated in the fun activities. There were quizzes, riddles and thought-provoking conversation pictures which evoked spontaneous responses. I enjoyed the session and thought it was a vibrant exercise for your organization (Participant from the MOEYI, Jamaica).

Kudos to Dr Devonsih and the Membership Team!

## MMIRA-CC Online Symposium

The MMIRA-CC Online Symposium aimed to provide mixed methods researchers in the Caribbean and other parts of the world with an opportunity to continue to network and share their work with mixed methods research (MMR) scholars in spite of the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Who would have thought that a pandemic could create this opportunity to extend our reach to such a geographically diverse population! We had 163 participants from the Caribbean, USA, UK, Canada, South Africa, India, Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Pakistan, China, Myanmar, Austria, Japan and Thailand. Regardless of time zone differences and being isolated in our homes and countries, the global community showed their commitment to the growth and development of MMR through their participation in the online symposium.

As a Caribbean Chapter, we are encouraged to advance our mission of building a cadre of high-quality MMR scholars. The continued support of the University of the West Indies and the MMR experts from the international community further strengthen our resolve. The guest speaker was Professor Donna Mertens and she was joined by a panel of MMR experts– Professors Tony Onwuegbuzie, Elizabeth Creamer, Burke Johnson, Judith Schoonenboom and John Hitchcock–who volunteered their time and expertise as panellists for a Meet the Experts Session at this symposium. This symposium also featured two workshops. One on the use of the QDA Miner software for analysing mixed methods data, facilitated by the software developer and president of Provalis Research Dr Normand Peladeau. The second workshop focussed on the Basics of MMR and it was being facilitated by our very own Caribbean MMR scholars Drs Loraine Cook, Vimala Kamalodeen, Tashane Haynes-Brown, Ingrid Hunt-Anderson and Ms Leemoy Weaver. I am particularly proud that as a Caribbean chapter we have the calibre of persons to facilitate an international workshop. The staging of this symposium especially during the pandemic when we are all isolated augurs well for the MMR community in the Caribbean and the rest of the world. It shows our commitment to the development of a global MMR community. Several of our international MMR experts commended us for this event:

“Kudos to all of you for a highly successful interactive virtual conference with minimal technical problems! I am so glad I was involved! It energized me. I mentioned that I felt like I was with friends. By that I mean it felt like I was among like minded people. So much dedication to research. You might have called us a “panel of experts” but you are experts as well. If MMIRA had a chapter award, you surely would win it.” (email communication, Professor Elizabeth Creamer, December 18, 2020).

“The conference was outstanding! Congratulations and thanks!” (email communication, Professor Burke Johnson, December 18, 2020).

“This was an exceptional conference. I had the pleasure of moving from one breakout session to the next, and so I was able to see an array of excellent presentations” (email communication, Professor Anthony Onwuegbuzie, December 18, 2020).

“Thank you for all your efforts. The conference was amazing! And, your perseverance and problem solving of technical issues was great. I so appreciate being part of this conference and seeing so many people who want to share and learn about MM. Thanks for including me” (email communication, Professor Donna Mertens, December 18, 2020).

The symposium was indeed a worthwhile and meaningful experience.

As President I wish to formally express my appreciation to The UWI School of Graduate Studies and Research, the Caribbean Journal of Mixed Methods Research (CJMRR) and the MMIRA-CC symposium planning committee.

## Membership

Report on membership for 2019 had indicated that we had 140 members (President Report, 2019). However, there were some anomalies on the lists that needed to be ratified. Based on crosschecks of all records for membership obtained for 2018 and 2019, it was determined that there were 113 contributing members in the MMIRA-CC. At present we have members from Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Belize, the USA and Canada.

In February 2020, welcome letters were sent out to all members of the MIIRA-CC and letters of invitation to join were sent to all other persons identified. There were 52 persons whose membership ended in March of 2020. However, no contributions for membership have been collected owing to the pandemic and the absence of an online facility to collect contributions for membership.

Although the process of ratifying the status of members was a time consuming and challenging task, we are now in a better position going forward. I wish to thank Dr Devonish and her team for their support in this process.

## Organizational Structure and Roles of the Committees

As a young organization that registered as a company with the Companies Office of Jamaica in September 2018, we were gradually recognizing the need for clarification and identification of specific roles and functions within the committees. Fine tuning the roles, responsibilities and relationships among the committees was accomplished through a series of meetings that I convened with the committee chairs and the members of the committees. The roles and responsibilities of the Membership Committee, the Marketing and Outreach Committee were the most critical as they performed separate but complimentary functions. The decisions taken regarding the committees were as follows:

### Marketing and Outreach Committee

1. Dr Cynthia Onyefulu and Dr Ingrid Hunt Anderson agreed to co-lead the Marketing and Outreach Committee
2. Ms Gia Anderson agreed to continue managing the Technical Aspect of the Website.
3. Dr Hunt-Anderson would be responsible for vetting content to be placed on the website.
4. Dr. Corent McDonald joined the Marketing and Outreach Committee and was given responsibility for managing the Facebook page.
5. Ms Michele Taylor agreed to take on the role of email administrator and technical support person with responsibility for Managing the Chapter's Gmail account and providing technical support for our media links: Facebook, YouTube, etc.

### Membership Committee

1. Dr Devonsih would continue to lead that committee and work with the team from the previous year which consisted of Dr Avalloy McCarthy-Curvin and Dr Claudette Fongkong-Mungal and Ms Tynessa Gay-Felix.
2. Communication relating to membership were to be directed to Dr Devonish.

3. Avalloy McCarthy-Curvin from the membership committee successfully defended her PhD thesis in 2020. We wish to formally congratulate Dr Avalloy McCarthy-Curvin.

#### **Professional Development Committee**

1. Drs. Loraine Cook and Vimala Kamalodeen agreed to co-lead the professional development committee which had been inactive for some time.

#### **Conference Committee**

1. It was agreed that the President should lead this committee.

#### **Governance Committee**

1. This committee has been inactive and will require the identification of a group of persons with expertise in areas such as law and business to lead this committee. This is a critical area that has adversely affected the operations of the MMIRA-CC. It is hoped that we will be able to identify persons with the expertise before the year ends. This will be important to ensure that we are able to comply with the tax and company regulations and register with the Friendly Society as a charitable organization.

### **MMIRA-CC's Standing with the Companies Office of Jamaica (COJ)**

Having registered as a company in September 2018 with the intent of being a non-profit, we were ignorant of many of the requirements for maintaining good standing with the government bodies to which we were now obligated. Due to our limited resources as a company, we were not in a position to contract professional services on a retainer agreement. Therefore, we had to make our own enquiries to become aware of our obligations.

Having learned of our obligation to file annual returns with the COJ, we filed our annual returns in January, 2020 and received a letter of good standing on February 13, 2020. This status was valid until 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2020. Due to the pandemic and restrictions on movement we were unable to meet our obligations to file the next returns with the COJ on or before October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020. However, on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, as President I took on the task and again filed our annual returns, paid the penalties for late filing of annual returns and requested a letter of good standing on behalf of the company. We are presently in good standing with the Companies Office of Jamaica.

It will be important going forward to ensure that as a company we file our annual returns with the COJ on or before the date of our incorporation which is September 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Tax Compliance Status**

In pursuit of a Tax Compliance Certificate (TCC) to meet the requirements to open a bank account, we learned that as a company we also had obligations to file annual returns with the Tax Administration of Jamaica (TAJ). This was again new information as we were of the opinion that having secured a Letter of Good Standing from the Companies Office of Jamaica, we had fulfilled our obligations as a company. We contracted the accounting services of Bogle and Company in August of 2020 to assist us in resolving the tax compliance matters. Unfortunately, this arrangement was terminated in February 2021 due to the

slow progress and inconsistencies in the information we received on different occasions relating to what was required of the company to become tax compliant.

The saying heavy is the head that wears the crown had never been so true! As the president, I decided to engage with the TAJ directly in attempt to resolve our tax related matters. I visited the TAJ, Kings Street in Kingston on March 12, 2021. I met with a Tax Compliance Officer and was guided on how to file the outstanding taxes for the periods ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 on behalf of the MMIRA-CC. All outstanding taxes for the MMIRA-CC were successfully submitted on the online portal. However, due to the late filing for the period ending December 31, 2019, there is an outstanding balance of JM\$ \$73,866.87 on the MMIRA-CC's account charged as penalty. As a result of this penalty, I submitted a letter requesting a waiver on the full amount of the penalties on behalf of the MMIRA-CC. A decision on the request for waiver of penalties is still pending, however there is no definitive date as to when a response to our request will be provided. We are anticipating a favourable response to our request for a waiver of penalties.

The MMIRA-CC received the first Tax Compliance Certificate on March 19, 2021, however this was valid for three months. Since then we obtained updated TCC on June 29, 2021 that is valid for three months (expiration date August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021). We intend to open the account before this TCC expires.

To maintain our status as tax compliant, it will be important going forward to ensure that we file our tax returns for the previous year ending December 31st before the 15<sup>th</sup> of March of each year.

## Income and Expenditure

For the period January 2020 to June 2021 there were no income generating activities. However, we still had recurring costs that had to be paid. These costs included filing our annual returns with the COJ, and renewal of the website domain. This depleted the cash we had in hand from membership contributions from the previous year significantly. As of June 2021, we have a total of JM\$200 and US\$437 in cash.

We were able to avoid a more significant cash depletion as a result of the voluntary service of various members of the executive. Members of the executive who incurred transportation and other costs while conducting tasks on behalf of the company did not seek reimbursement from the MMIRA-CC. This demonstrated the commitment of the members of the executive and the subcommittees to advancing the growth of the company.

With no in person events executed due to the pandemic, costs for planning and executing events were minimal. The few budgetary items associated with the events that would have incurred costs were sponsored. I wish to thank the UWI School of Graduate Studies and Research that sponsored the honorarium for the guest speaker at the symposium and provided the Zoom link that had the capacity to host the 163 participants at the symposium.

The table provides the details of the expenditures for the period January 2020 to June 2021.

### Table 1.

*Income and Expenditure Report for January 2020 to June 2021.*

Income & Expenditure from Membership Contributions			
	CASH IN HAND		
	\$JM	\$USD	
Income			
Opening Balance (Cash in Hand) as at Jan 2020	4,200.00	956.00	
Expenditure			
Website Renewal (2020)		170.00	
Companies Office Annual Returns and Good Standing	4000.00	176.00	(JM\$18300)
Website Renewal (2021)		173.00	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4000.00</b>	<b>519.00</b>	
Closing Balance as of June 2021	200.00	437.00	
Income & Expenditure for Events – Digital Lunch Hour and Online Symposium			
Income			
Digital Lunch Hour	0	0	
Online Symposium	0	0	
Sponsored Expenditure			
Zoom link for Digital Lunch Hour (maximum 100 participants)		14.00	
Zoom link for Online Symposium (over 100 participants) - (UWI, SGSR)		20.00.00	
Honorarium for Symposium Guest Speaker (UWI, SGSR)		300	
<b>Total Costs Sponsored</b>		<b>US\$334.00</b>	

## Conclusion

The normal term as president is one year. However, we are operating in unprecedented times with a global pandemic, quarantine orders, requirements for physical distance and in some case isolation. These circumstances delayed the process of passing on the mantle to a new president in January 2021. None-the less, I have persevered and with the support of the members of the MMIRA-CC executive, the members of the subcommittees, the MMIRA-CC members, the UWI and the international mixed methods research community we have accomplished several important tasks.

Under my leadership as President, the MMIRA-CC has made several important strides. The membership list is now ratified. We are in good standing with the COJ and we received our first TCC. These have put us in a position to strengthen the operations of the company. However, it will be critical going forward that we register with the Friendly Society as a charitable organization and ensure that we maintain good standing with the TAJ and COJ.

One of my proudest moments as president of this noble organization was knowing that I played an integral role in conceptualizing, planning and executing the MMIRA-CC Online Symposium in December 2020. We ended 2020 on a high note in spite of the challenges presented by the global pandemic. We were able to offer researchers across the globe with an opportunity to present their work, participate in workshops and panel discussions with internationally recognized experts and to network with mixed methods researchers globally at no cost to them.

As we evolve as a chapter, we are determined to continue to fulfil the MMIRA-CC's vision of bringing together diverse communities of scholars, students, practitioners, policymakers, citizens, and other stakeholders, with the goal of expanding knowledge and promoting social betterment, and justice for the improvement of the quality of life in the Caribbean. Thank you all for your support and I wish our incoming president continued success.

Tashane Haynes-Brown, Ph.D.

President, The MMIRA-CC

June 30, 2021