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PHOTOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN JAMAICA: DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK

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Problem Statement

- Does Jamaica have a national photographic culture that needs to be taken into account in order to develop an effective photographic pedagogy?



UTech Jamaica photography students in Port Maria, Jamaica. *Photo by Andrew P. Smith*

Research Objectives

- To identify aspects of Jamaica's culture that need to be taken into account when creating a model for photography education.
- To create a framework for teaching photography that can be adapted for workshops, university and TVET modules in Jamaica.

Literature

- Newbury, 1997. “**Attention to photography as a cultural and educational practice**, not simply as a set of skills and a body of knowledge, **is essential for the development of photographic education.**”
- Vanelli, 2014. Recommends formal training for a photography career or side business.

National Photographic Culture

- “The nature of photography, its practices and meanings in a national context.” (after Tucker, n.d.).



Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness is shielded from press photographers by his bodyguard during election day on December 29, 2011. *Photo by Andrew P. Smith*

Elements of National Photographic Culture

1. History of Photography.
2. Scope of Photography.
3. Attitudes and Perceptions towards Photography.
4. Status of the Photographer in Society.
 - “It is the argument that in his/her many guises the photographer is an important figure in contemporary culture”. (Newbury, p. 421).

Elements of Photographic Culture

4. Production of Photography: portrait studios, weddings, photojournalism, advertising, tourism, publications, fine art.
5. Consumption of Photography: personal, commercial, documentation, news, fine art.
6. Genres & Subjects of Photographs – family, strangers, outdoor, events.
7. Impact of Digital Photography on the Practice and Acceptance of Photography.

Research Question 1

- What uniquely Jamaican cultural factors have influenced how photography is taught and learned?
- ◎ Data collection methods
 - Online survey of 502 past photography students (93 responses (18.5%) were received).
 - Observations and experiences.
 - Literature.

Research Question 2

- What are the future plans of Jamaican photography students?
- ⦿ Data collection methods
 - Online survey of 502 past photography students (93 responses (18.5%) were received). (Q 1 & 2)

Research Question 3

- 3. What are the global best practices in photography education?

Data collection methods

Answers received from the UNESCO/UNEVOC e-Forum.

- Joe Wilson, Head of New Ventures of the Scottish Qualifications Authority,
- Emmanuel Mwemezi from Tanzania
- Damian Boyle of Northlands College in Canada.

Research Question 4

- What assessments will enable learners to acquire the skills and competencies necessary to be successful professional photographers?
- Data collection methods
 - Interviews of local and global industry professionals – photographers, users and publishers.
 - Literature from the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Findings: Research Question 1

What uniquely Jamaican cultural factors have influenced how photography is taught and learned?

- History of photography in Jamaica.
- Attitudes and perceptions to photography.

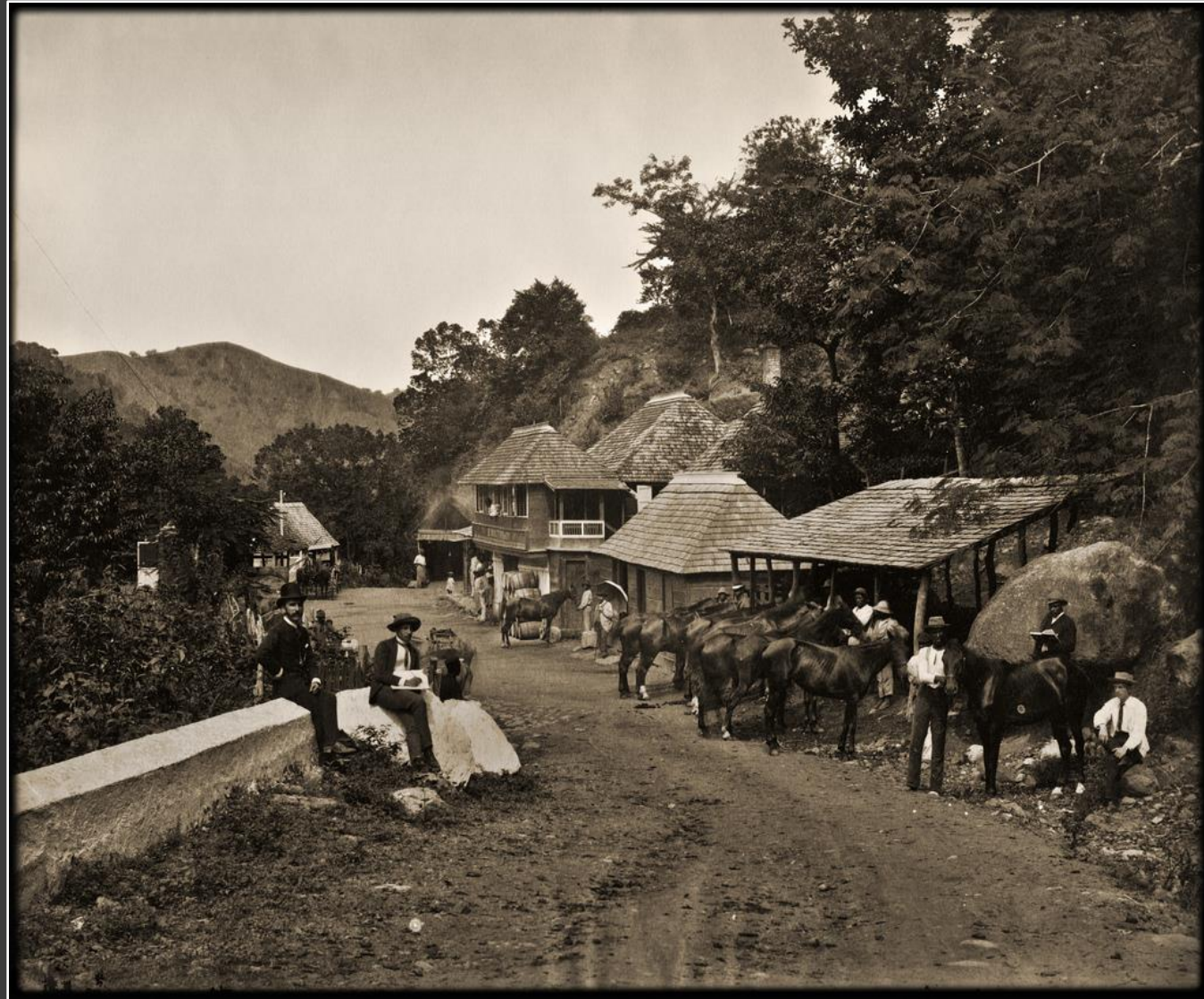
History of Photography in Jamaica

- 1838: Emancipation from Slavery
- 1839: Photography invented in Europe
- 1844–1933: A. Duperly and Sons operates at 98 King Street. Published *Daguerrian Excursions in Jamaica & Picturesque Jamaica*
- c.1882 – c.1922: J. W. Cleary and E. W. Elliott operates at 89 King Street, Kingston



Road To Bog Walk A. Duperly & Sons; c. 1891

Permission of :The Caribbean Photo Archive



Gordon Town, Jamaica; John Cleary. 1891
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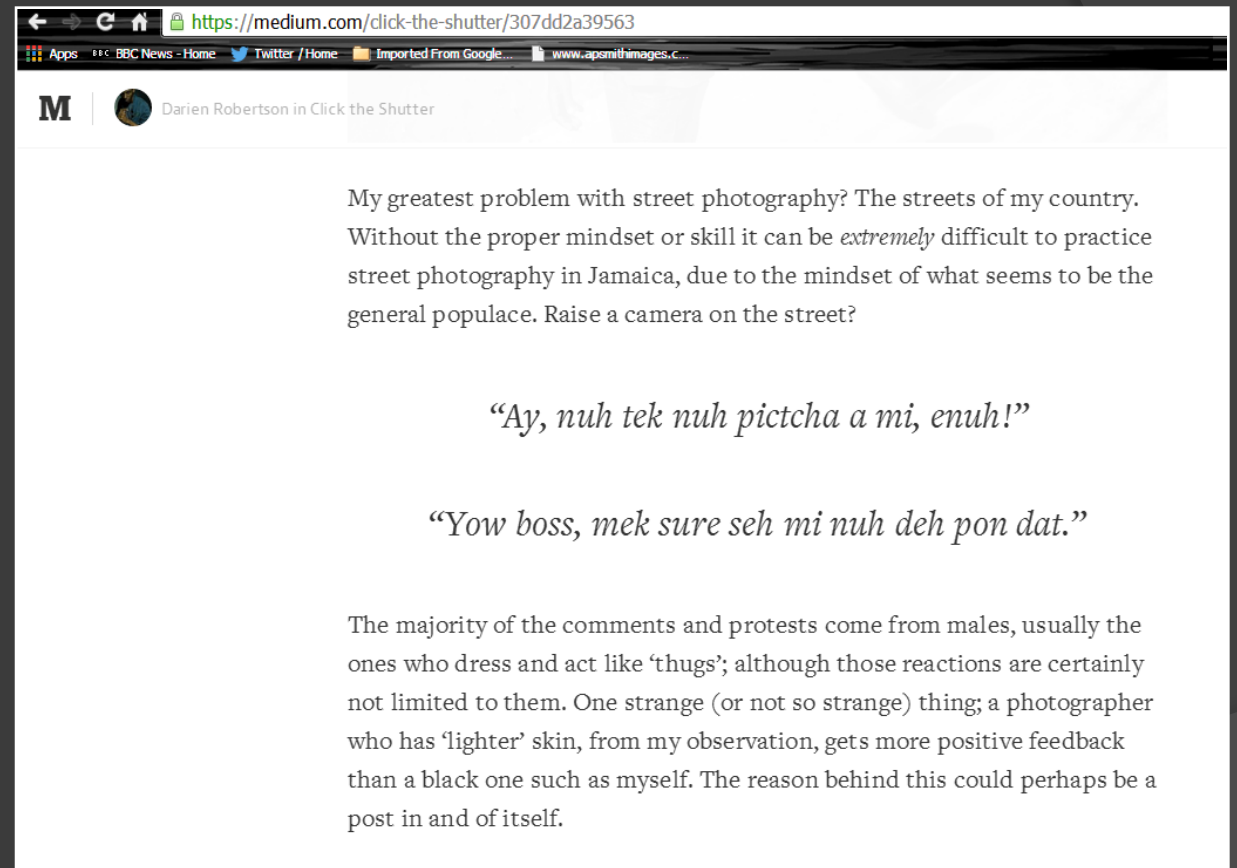


Plumb Point Lighthouse, John Cleary. ca 1895

Permission of :The Caribbean Photo Archive

Attitudes & Perceptions

- “An when de tourists come up to de country and see we working in de ground, dem is not goin’ to do anything fa we, but take picta and laugh at we.” *The Leader* of February 5 1904 in Taylor 1993.
- “You guys tourists or reporters?” Motorist in Port Royal, 2011.



Blog post on street photography experiences in Jamaica by Darien Robertson.

Attitude & Perceptions

- ◉ Many Jamaican photographers are more reluctant to photograph Jamaicans than foreigners are.
 - Photographers themselves do not like to be photographed by strangers.
 - Many Jamaican photographers expect a negative response from subjects.



Photography students conversing with a resident of Port Royal, Jamaica. *Photo by Andrew P. Smith*

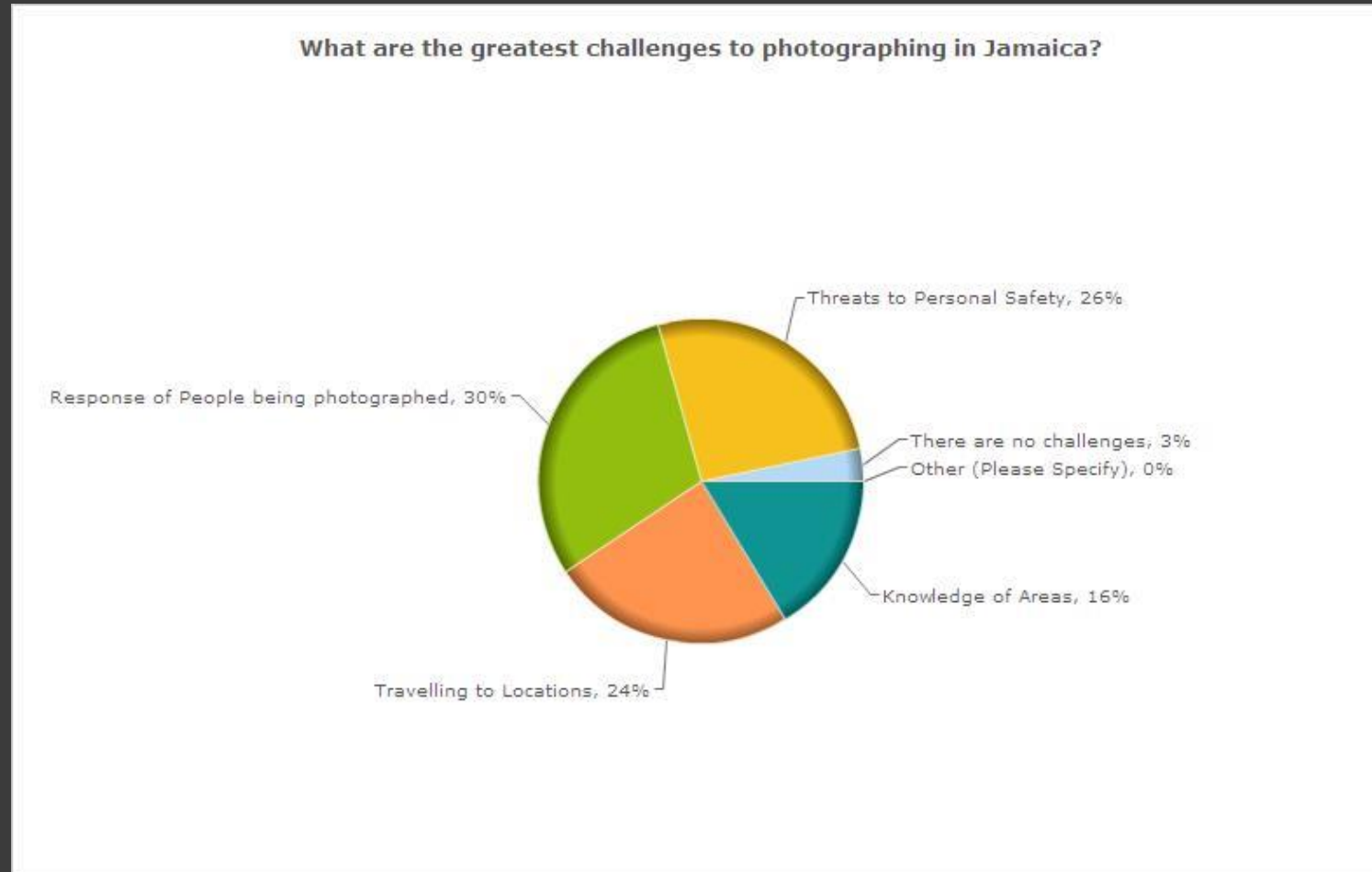
Attitude & Perceptions

- ◉ When it comes to being subjects, most Jamaicans either pose or hide.
 - Very few ignore the camera, or
 - Accept it as a part of society, including regular citizens and those in authority.

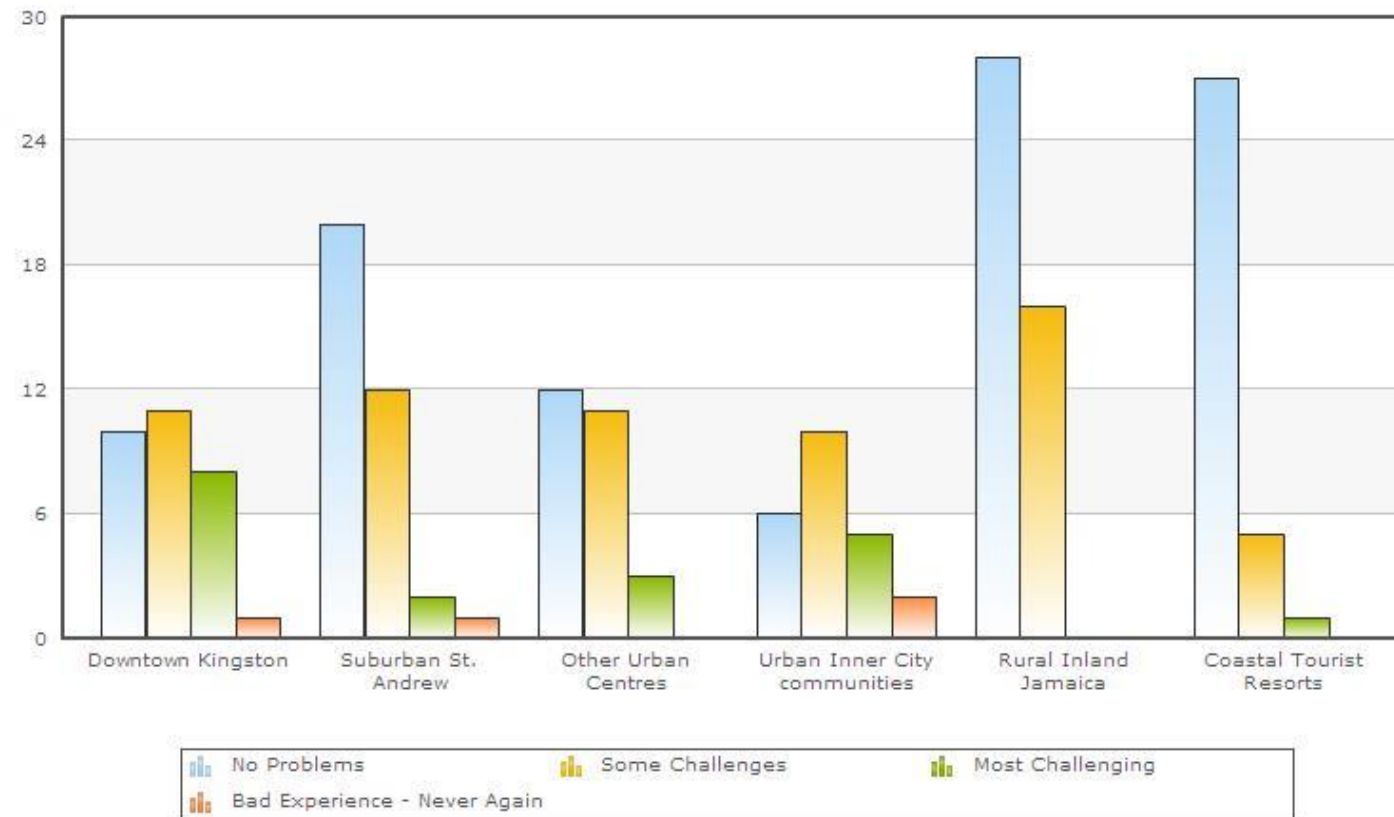


Commuters in Papine, St. Andrew, Jamaica, reacting to a photographer. *Photo by Andrew P. Smith*

Challenges Photographing in Jamaica



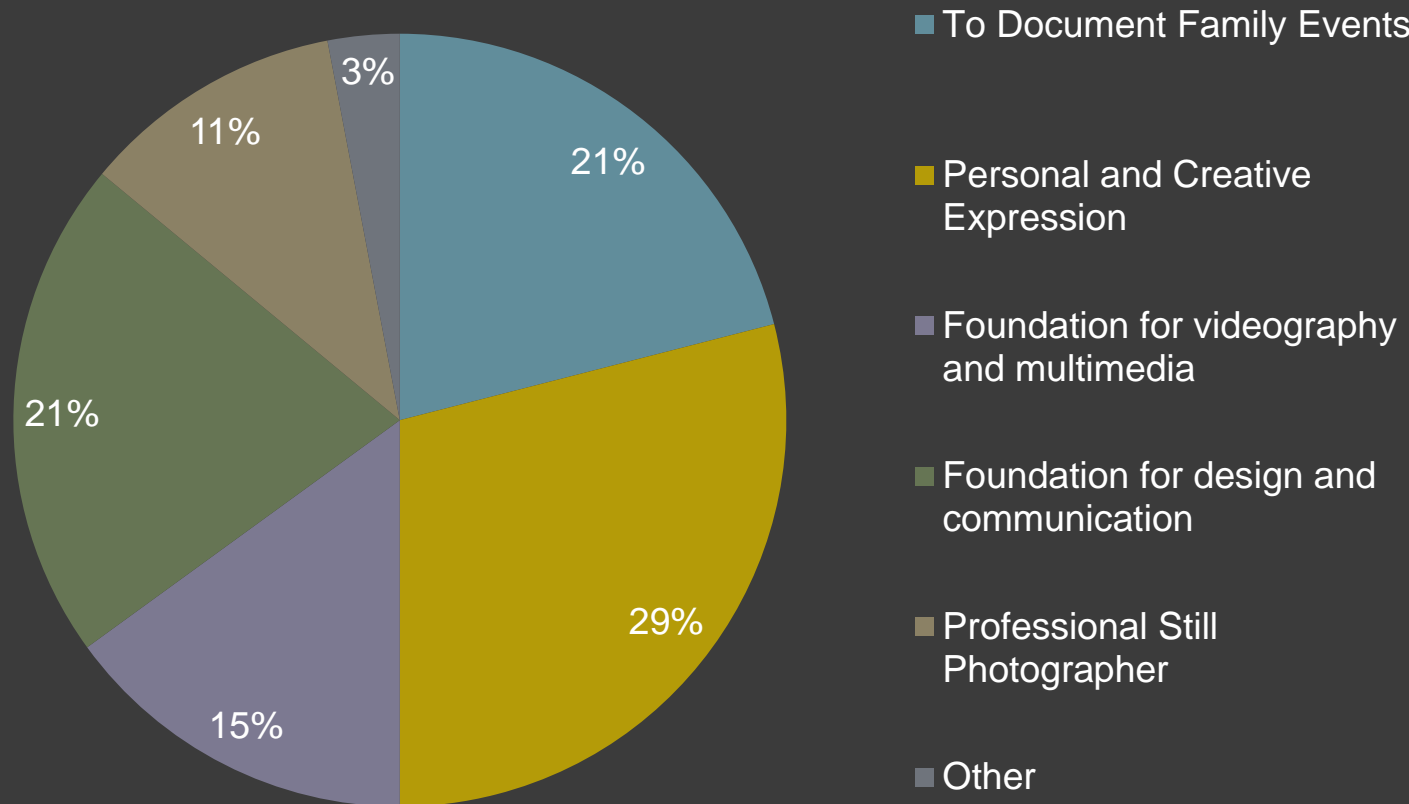
Which of these locations was the most challenging?



Findings: Research Question 2

- ⦿ What are the future plans of Jamaican photography students?
 - Do they believe that they can become a professional photographer in Jamaica?
 - Do they have a desire to become a professional photographer in Jamaica?
 - What will they use their photographic skills for?
- 56 respondents (60%) answered “Yes” to “Do you believe that you can become a professional photographer in Jamaica?”
- However, only 11% indicated a desire to become professional photographers.

Planned Use of Photographic Skills



Findings: Research Question 3

- What are the global best practices in TVET photography education?

Subject Title	Level	Qualification	SCQF Levels
Computers and Digital Photography (NQGA)	NPA	NQGA	5
Creative Printmaking with Photography (NC)	NC	NC	6
Photography (New NQ)	Higher	New NQ	6
Photography (HN)	HNC	HN	7, 8
Photography (HN)	HND	HN	7, 8
Photography (NQ)	Higher	NQ	6
Photography (NC)	NC	NC	6
Photography (NQGA)	NPA	NQGA	30

The Scottish Model of TVET Photography modules.

Best Practices for TVET Photography Education

- Make the programme multi-level to enable a variety of learners to earn nationally recognized certification.
- Identify the required competencies for levels and apply participatory learning methods.
- Involve industry experts in programme design.
- Accommodate users with a variety of cameras.

Findings: Research Question 4

- What assessments will enable learners to acquire the skills and competencies necessary to be successful professional photographers?

Performance Based Assessments

- ⦿ Photographing of Specialised Genres
 - Research/workbooks or reports
 - Practical exercises
- ⦿ Photography Business and Marketing Skills
 - Production of relevant business documents
- ⦿ Competence of using photographic equipment
- ⦿ Visual Literacy
 - Practical exercises
 - Theory-based (e-learning)

Skills and Competencies.

- Proficiency with equipment.
- Visual Literacy
- Knowing of what makes a high quality photograph.
- How to create such photographs.

Business and Entrepreneurial skills.

- Create a niche.
- Pricing and Costing.
- Stock images.
- Pitching stories to global agencies and NGOs.

Conclusions

- Jamaica's photographic culture - history, perceptions and attitudes – needs to be taken into account when developing an educational framework.
 - Most photographers' experiences are negative.
 - Newbury, 1997. "Attention to photography as a cultural and educational practice, is essential for the development of photographic education."

Conclusions

- ⦿ There are local and global opportunities
 - Become competent with the equipment.
 - Become visually literate.
 - Properly photograph their chosen genre.
 - Business and entrepreneurial skills.
- ⦿ Assessments required
 - Practical exercises, portfolios, e-assessments, research reports and create business documents.

Recommendations

- Take the attitude and perceptions of both the photographers and subjects into account when developing modules.
- Use these performance-based assessments in all educational institutions that offer photography courses as a part of their programmes of study.

Future Research

- Impact of smart phones on the acceptance of photography in Jamaican society.

Thank You!!