Thanks to the Expedition Fund, I was able to make up the additional funds I needed to pay for my travel to Jamaica for research purposes during the summer of 2009.

I travelled to Jamaica on August 6, 2009, the day that Jamaica celebrated its 47th anniversary of independence from British colonial rule. While in Jamaica, I conducted research at the University of the West Indies Library and the Norman Manley Law School Library relevant to my PhD thesis. I conducted research particularly on the history and evolution of the Maroon and Rastafari communities in Jamaica. I was able to access books, materials and information that I would not have been able to access were I not in Jamaica.

As part of my PhD research, I also visited a traditional Maroon community and a traditional Rastafari community in Jamaica. I visited the Accompong Maroon community in the hills of the parish of St. Elizabeth, where I was asked to be the Moderator for the Colonel Candidate Debates. I was therefore able to observe first hand how governance succession is handled within that traditional Maroon community.

In September I visited a Nyahbinghi Rastafari community in Scott’s Pass in the hills of the parish of Clarendon. There I met several elders of the community and participated in a community reasoning and farewell for one of the elders who was set to travel to Ethiopia as a part of a fact-finding mission later that month.

In September, I conducted a seminar at the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office where I shared aspects of my current PhD research
with a wide cross-section of government and non-government representatives, including several representatives of the Maroon and Rastafari communities. I presented my paper titled “Protecting the Traditions of the Maroons and Rastafari.” It was well-received and provoked interesting feedback and discussion from the seminar participants.

I also met several times with and gave advice to the Ethio-Africa Diaspora Union Millennium Council, a non-governmental organisation established to represent the several different Rastafari communities in Jamaica. The Council sought my advice in relation to several intellectual property issues and projects with which the Council is currently involved.

In addition, I also spoke at the 4th Trumpet Rally organised by the Council in September. I made a presentation to the Rastafari community about Rastafari intellectual property and Rastafari cultural heritage rights.

Thanks to the Expedition Fund, I was able to get on the ground experience and exposure to aid and assist my PhD research. My research focuses on living communities in Jamaica, which are always evolving, while maintaining strong socio-cultural and religious traditions, many of which are undocumented. The experience I gained was therefore invaluable. For this I am very appreciative of the Queen Mary Expedition Fund.

Yours faithfully,
Marcus Goffe