

# The Beckley Foundation

PIONEERING CANNABIS RESEARCH AND POLICY REFORM SINCE 1998

Amanda Feilding is delighted to have been welcomed by Mark Golding, Jamaican Minister of Justice, to collaborate with his Ministry and the government in forming their pioneering cannabis industry. She is full of admiration for how Jamaica is addressing the many complex issues surrounding the creation of a regulated market for medical cannabis. The Beckley Foundation applauds Jamaica for endeavouring to develop drug policies that aim to protect health, reduce harms, be cost-effective, and respect human rights. After over 100 years of prohibition, the Rastafari community, which has long campaigned for its religious freedoms, and the many Jamaicans who use ganja for its medicinal properties, are finally having their voices heard. Jamaica is now set to become a global hub for research, enabling the medicinal and therapeutic use of cannabis to flourish.



## Changing Minds

The Beckley Foundation's Policy Programme provides a rigorous review of global drug policies, and develops a scientific evidence-base on which to build alternative policies. For the last 17 years, Amanda Feilding has brought together leading international experts to discuss the complex and taboo issues surrounding cannabis policy, and to explore new regulatory models to protect health and reduce the disastrous collateral harms caused by prohibition.

Amanda set up the Beckley Foundation in 1998 to reform global drug policies through the very best scientific research. From 2000 onwards she convened and hosted a series of seminars held at the House of Lords in London. These were the first to bring together scientists, politicians, and thought-leaders to share knowledge, foster collaboration, and debate ways forward in reforming global drug policies.

The 2006 seminar, entitled "*Where can we go with Cannabis Control?*" served as the launch of the Beckley Foundation's *Global Cannabis Commission* which was the first team of leading drug policy experts to analyse global cannabis policies. This resulted in the seminal report: *Cannabis Policy: Moving Beyond Stalemate*.

The Beckley Foundation's essential research helped build the evidence-base on which regulated markets are being formed in the USA, Jamaica and elsewhere, in this defining moment in global drug policy history.

The Jamaican government is leading this movement through innovative policy reforms and is setting Jamaica up to be a major centre for global health and medical research. We hope the Beckley Foundation's work will be influential in this transformative process.

The 'War on Drugs' continues to cause worldwide devastation, despite the encouraging recent reforms around the world. Over 50 years of escalating expenditure, suffering and social devastation have been perpetuated by the taboo against discussing alternative policies. Jamaica is helping break this taboo with its forward-thinking policy initiatives.

This is a time for great optimism in Jamaica with access to essential medicines granted and the persecution of the Rastafari community at the beginning of the end. The Beckley Foundation is excited to be part of this reform movement.





## Pioneering Research

Through the Beckley Foundation Scientific Programme, Amanda Feilding collaborates with leading scientists around the world to design and conduct ground-breaking cannabis research and clinical trials, using the latest developments in neuroscience and brain imaging technology.

Cannabis is by far the most widely used illicit psychoactive substance and is therefore the mainstay of the 'War on Drugs'. It is used by an estimated 166 million people worldwide, accounting for 80% of illicit drug use. Of the hundreds of studies that have investigated its effects, the vast majority has focused on 'problematic' aspects, from the perspectives of psychiatry, toxicology, and criminology.

Scientific research into the mechanisms of action and the potential medicinal benefits of the cannabinoids, and other compounds that make up the plant's complex biochemistry, is very sparse. Amanda and the Beckley Foundation have been at the forefront of research into the potential benefits of whole cannabis and its individual cannabinoids.

The Foundation is now excited about working with academic and other leading institutions, including Rastafari communities, to cultivate and undertake scientific research on different strains of cannabis. Amanda is particularly keen to re-introduce the traditional Jamaican landraces, with a balanced THC/CBD ratio.

Jamaica has always used cannabis for its medicinal properties. The Foundation wishes to investigate this traditional medicine, using modern techniques and state-of-the-art technology. We are just starting to understand how cannabis with low THC and

high CBD has special beneficial medicinal and therapeutic effects.

Many of the concerns regarding cannabis regulation stem from the much-publicised psychiatric side-effects experienced by some users of high-THC strains. Solutions may lie in the plant itself. Working in collaboration with Kings College London, Amanda has conducted some of the first studies to highlight the anti-anxiety and anti-psychotic properties of CBD.

The Foundation is currently working with University College London to compare the effects of different strains of cannabis with varying THC/CBD ratios using brain-imaging technology.

The Beckley Foundation is at the forefront of research with collaborators around the world into the use of cannabinoids in many vital areas, such as pain management, the treatment of cancer and overcoming addiction.

With the Jamaican government's commitment to medical research, and the expertise of the scientific community in Jamaica, research into cannabis can now progress faster than ever before. The Foundation greatly looks forward to collaborating in this exciting movement which has the potential to open up new avenues to treatment, and thereby end much suffering.