JAASP

Jamaica All Age Schools Project

changing the future

This publication provides an overview of the Jamaica All Age Schools Project (JAASP) which ran for 3 years between 2000 and 2003. The direct beneficiaries of the project are the children and communities in the most disadvantaged, remote rural areas of Jamaica. JAASP specifically aimed to tackle the key issues of Access, Quality, Retention and Equity in relation to rural education. One of the underlying principles behind the project has been the building of partnerships between schools, parents, communities, Ministry of Education officers and the private sector to develop improved lifetime opportunities for rural children. The voices of different participants are included here and are evidence of the project focus on 'learning for all'

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Changing the Future

Impact Assessment of the Jamaica All Age Schools Project

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The Jamaica All Age Schools Project

Introduction

Funded by the UK Government Department for International Development as part of its programme to eliminate poverty, and in collaboration with the Government of Jamaica, JAASP has worked with 48 remote rural All-Age schools since April 2000. These schools, located in clusters in each of the six education regions of the island, were afforded the lowest status by the community at large, being characterised by

- low rates of student achievement
- high rates of absenteeism
- low levels of community and financial support
- inadequate buildings
- minimum resources for learning

As a consequence, they produced students who were least qualified for work or upper secondary education. Against this background, JAASP specifically aimed to tackle the key issues identified by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture: Access, Quality, Retention and Equity.

The overall purpose of the project was to provide better education for children in poor rural communities and, through this, to contribute to improved lifetime opportunities for them. The direct beneficiaries of the project are the children and communities in the most disadvantaged, remote rural areas of Jamaica. There are wider benefits for all through the development of sustainable systems at central and regional levels. This publication provides an overview of the project and its achievements in seven main components, drawing on a range of evidence and including the voices of different participants.

Key Principles

- involving all stakeholders through a participatory approach

- developing ownership of the project through autonomy and accountability of stakeholders

- engaging parents and the community in the life of the school and their children's education

- including community development as a key component for sustainability

- recognising diversity within the classroom

- developing a learning culture: a focus on learning for all and on everyone sharing what they have learned

- respecting, and building on, the existing work of Jamaican educators

Key achievements

The project achieved its objectives in the following areas:

- improved school attendance

- increased motivation on the part of students to perform well and stay in education

- improved student performance, especially in literacy

- increased involvement of parents in children's education and the life of the school

- improved teacher performance in general and the development of school resource persons in literacy, numeracy, pastoral care, special needs, facilitation skills

- improved quality of teaching and learning in the classroom

- the needs of individual children are now identified and planned for

- improved school management, greater accountability and enhanced capacity of Principals to work in collaboration with the community

- community projects in 45 communities have strengthened community spirit and laid the foundation for income-generation and employment opportunities

- regional and national systems have been strengthened to provide support for teaching and learning and for participatory school management

- schools were refurbished and became attractive places to work and learn

- more books and equipment were made available to support teaching and learning, with computers in use in all schools

- educators work together more to develop and share good practice at school, regional and national levels

Unplanned Outcomes

In addition there were important unplanned benefits which include:

- An increased level of confidence, self-esteem and satisfaction among all those involved in JAASP and higher expectations of themselves and each other. This is reflected in stakeholders' commitment and perceived capacity to sustain the gains of the project and continue to bring about change

- The MOEYC have adapted the JAASP School Improvement Planning process and Principals from other Primary and All-Age Schools have been trained. Training in

performance management and facilitation skills has also been developed, to support school-based participatory professional development of teachers

- Capacity building for Community Relations Education Officers in all 6 regions means they are better able to support school / community development in all schools

- Closer links have been developed by the project between education, health and social services in screening for and supporting Special Needs, especially at the transition level between Basic Schools and Grade 1 classes, through cross-sector 'Health Fairs'

- The project has meant a big boost to adult education, with skills sharing and learning in community projects, community members benefiting from computer classes to gain jobs or places for further study, and parents taking up reading to support their children

- Some schools and communities have developed the skills to write proposals for funding from other agencies for future development initiatives, through JAASP sponsorship of Community Participation Facilitators to attend a short course at UWI

- A national literacy conference, to explore the rôle of Jamaican Literacy Research and Development Centres, was held in January 2003, resulting in a commitment to develop a regular forum for continued exchange of best practices in literacy teaching

- The establishment of the Portland Public-Private Partnership in Education, through which local businesses support school development in Region 2, providing financial aid and human resources for specific projects and helping to disseminate success

Before JAASP	**After JAASP**
42% boys and 27% of girls were classified At Risk in the Grade 4 Literacy Test	Of 12 schools surveyed • 11 schools have decreased the total number of students At Risk by more than 10% • 9 schools have increased the number of both boys and girls Not At Risk by more than 10% • In 1 school the boys' score has risen beyond the regional average increase
8 out of 48 JAASP schools (16%) achieved the national average in all 5 subjects for both boys and girls in the Grade 6 Achievement Test (GSAT) Boys generally had much lower scores than girls and pulled down the school average Maths was the weakest subject in most JAASP schools	Of 24 schools surveyed • 14 schools have increased their average scores in at least 4 out of 5 subjects (58%) • 6 schools achieved scores above or around the national and regional averages in all 5 subjects (25%) • In 12 schools boys have improved their scores to national average or above in at least 3 subjects (50%) • In 9 schools Maths scores for boys have improved to or beyond the national average and in 6 schools for girls (37% - 25%)
Attendance as low as 61% in some schools. Girls' attendance higher than boys, in some schools a wide difference (80% for girls, 65% for boys)	Of 16 schools surveyed • 6 schools now have attendance rates of around 85% • Boys have an average attendance of 73% compared to 79% for girls

Component 1: Community / School Participation

Objectives

This component was based on the understanding of the interdependency between the school and the community it serves. The project wanted to build on school/community relations which had been developed by previous projects like SCOPE. The aim was to develop active participation by different community members in the life of the school, involving them in decisions about their children's education, helping to plan school developments, supporting classroom activities and providing skills or time for school improvement programmes. In addition, the component included educational opportunities for the community itself, in relation to their rôle as parents, as breadwinners, as individuals and as community members

Baseline

Relations between school and parents tended to be limited, there were negative perceptions of school management and this was reflected in a low level of community support for the school. There was irregular attendance by students, which was found to be partly related to poverty in the community, with children being kept at home to support economic activity. Family-related factors included lack of parenting skills, the high rate of single parent families and low education level of parents, with a consequent lack of value placed on education as a way out of poverty. The community survey also highlighted perceptions about the poor quality of education which children received and the poor school conditions in which they were expected to learn. In general communities were characterised by a sense of frustration and hopelessness with a pessimistic attitude to the possibility of change.

Main Activities

Community Participation Facilitators: each school had a CPF, recruited from the locality and trained to sensitise and mobilise the community, train community members and support community projects

Community Survey: using participatory techniques, 20 communities were surveyed for the project baseline

Training of CREOs: in use of participatory approaches for community mobilisation

School Development Plan / School Improvement Action Group: community members were trained and involved in analysing problems and making decisions along with teachers and Principals

Outreach: the CPF made home visits to help develop relationships between parents and school and parents' understanding of the importance of education

School / Community Programmes: funding was provided for projects to support children's achievements (eg Family Literacy) and to promote community development (eg skills training, income generation) as part of the School Improvement Plan

SPICE Group: each school set up a School Partnership in Children's Education Group, with community members trained by the CPF to plan and carry forward community programmes

Public-Private Partnerships: training and support was provided for developing partnerships with local business to obtain additional resources

Pastoral care: training and support for the development of school pastoral care plans involving parents and teachers, in order to nurture health & well-being and emotional development of students

Training for Principals and Parents: in community participation and community development, with a focus on the links between poverty, equity, marginalisation and lack of achievement in education and developing methods to address these

Overall Impact

- Attendance has improved, due to greater parental involvement, better home-school relationships and community projects such as free breakfast programmes supported by school farms and vegetable gardens

- Community members have a sense of ownership in the school through involvement in school beautification projects and increased access to school resources, including computers

- Employment opportunities have increased through contracts for school works, skills training and income-generating projects

- Parents are better motivated and able to provide support for their children's learning at home, through developing their own literacy and through greater informal contact with teachers

- Community spirit has increased through skills sharing, learning together, joint planning for the future and community projects such as building a new basic school. Community support can be built into future projects

- School communities have built on existing partnerships and developed skills to strengthen these as well as for seeking new private sponsorship and funding from public agencies to help sustain improvements

- A range of stakeholders have benefited from training in the participatory development of new programmes / projects in parental involvement and parent empowerment, in order for each school to sustain the gains of the project in this area

Before JAASP	After JAASP
Relatively low level of involvement in school management	In all 48 schools community members have been involved in school development planning At least one community school meeting held each term to discuss progress towards school targets 25 out of 41 schools surveyed at end of project have functioning SPICE groups
Low level of financial support in remote rural areas	Public-Private Partnership in Education workshops held in each region to sensitize the business sector 24 schools have received some form of sponsorship from the private sector in new partnerships (Regions 2,3,4)
Limited level of community development	At least one community project operational in most (42) school communities, directly or indirectly related to supporting children's learning 90% school communities making use of computers for literacy (also in sewing and farming projects) Most common community projects are: • Sewing / crafts (women) • Baking (with new stove) • Farming on school compound 500 community members have benefited directly
Limited capacity for promoting school / community involvement	5 CREOs, 3 SEOs and 4 new EOs trained in community mobilisation and trained as trainers for developing SPICE groups 43 CPFs trained in PLA (participatory tools and techniques) to carry out the baseline survey and School Improvement Planning 17 CPFs trained as trainers and employed to train SPICE groups 40 schools represented at the Principals workshop on community mobilisation 90 parents, Principals, CREOs and other EOs took part in the 1-week Parent Participation Facilitation Skills workshop
Limited system of pastoral care	Principal and one teacher from each JAASP school exposed to basic principles of guidance and counselling Parents and community members from most schools exposed to pastoral care training and involved in developing pastoral care plans

Caring communities can make a difference

Maryland All Age School is in the Parish of Hanover. People here are not easily convinced and will only invest their time and energy on something that brings results. The community project was given much thought before a sewing project was decided on. The group consisted of one man and 17 women. A lot was left to the group as they had to decide on what they wanted to sew and on a workable timetable. The arrival of sewing machines and sergers sparked the interest of everyone. The main objective was to sew domestic items for sale but first everyone had to learn how to use the machines, tape measure, meter stick and tailor's chalk. An entire school year was dedicated to learning to sew and producing quality items for sale. Skirts, pillows, curtains, doilies and many more items were laboured on and finally completed. The highlight was Open Day May 2002 where we saw the display of raw as well as carefully trained talent. The women wore skirts that they hand-made and demonstrated the cutting of skirts and throw-pillows. The project managed to sell pillows and curtain sets even before Open Day. Perhaps the most important result was the sense of accomplishment that the group earned from seeing their work on display and getting accolades from teachers and other community members alike. The group sewed school uniforms during the summer and also provided costumes for the school Maypole troupe. Income earned has been reinvested and a new phase of the project has started, with a focus on pastry making. The results earned by the first group have inspired other community members to want to be a part of it. Learning to bake and producing products for sale will again be the order of the day. A longer term plan is to set up a community shop on the road, which is on the route for tourists visiting the area. The community will continue to bond and grow in the spirit encouraged by JAASP.

Delva M Baker, Principal

"The attention of the whole community is on the school, we want the school to be on top and we are moving there. We work with the principal and they work with us, and together we can move mountains. The community is a part of the school, we know what is happening because we are planning it. "

Sewing class at Morgan's Pass

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Reaching out and garnering support from business

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The **Portland Public-Private Partnership in Education (P3E)** had its genesis in May 2002 when a workshop was held to sensitize the business and service clubs in the region to JAASP and its overall objective of improved lifelong learning and opportunities for poor rural communities. To this end, Bob Hunter and Bob Marshall from the Wolverhampton Education Action Zone shared information on the UK model for business and education partnerships. The aim of the workshop was to produce a workable business/education plan, using the reference manual provided and exercises which explored issues in the region. The partners on the board include: Jamaica National Building Society, whose manager, Mr Paul Martin, chairs the P3E; Singer Company; Ivanhoe's Guest House; Armstrong's Haberdashery; Tim Bamboo Hotel; Chenel's Pizza; Jamaica Information Service; Portland Co-op Credit Union and an educator (returned resident from the UK). Although the group is small, regular monthly meetings are held. Achievements so far include the following: one-week computer training for 8 classroom teachers; prioritization of wish lists from 8 schools; contact with businesses at local level; solicited support from Urban Development Corporation for a Basic School for Bybrook; a pledge of $4000 towards purchasing a stove for Bloomfield All Age School; adult education classes in English and Social Studies progressing to exams; and family literacy classes for parents. Future plans include sourcing tools and equipment for community projects; on-going computer classes for more teachers; and a Festival to showcase school / community talents. Members also plan to visit more schools and recruit more businesses to get on board. The P3E has raised awareness of the role of businesses in the support and sustainability of local schools.

Janeann Allen, CREO, Region 2

Community members building the new basic school at Ginger Hill as part of their plan to raise standards at Grade 1

If you don't share knowledge, you will kill it

Jennifer Gordon was recruited as Community Participation Facilitator to work with Ginger Hill and Pisgah All Age Schools (in the Parish of St Elisabeth) which serve more than 10 communities.

"I had a small farm and a shop but I've always been giving service to the community so when I heard about the workshop I said 'I'll be there'. And it opened up a whole new scenario in my life, it is like going back to school. I was enthused to work with community members on the team for school development planning – the children as well, you know, had their input – and on how to spend the money. For we can only inherit the money if we unite. It's not for individual benefit but for community benefit: some people stayed away from community meetings when they heard this. It was very challenging, different people had different goals and we had to do the pairwise ranking many times before we agreed on priorities for the community project and then call people back to let them know what is happening.

I went into the other communities where I'd never had the chance to meet and talk to people before, telling them the school is on a move, telling them about the importance of coming to PTA meetings – and this is one area where the school really broke ground, getting parents, especially fathers, along. I encourage them to send their children to school. Some parents couldn't afford the lunch money but I encourage them 'Scratch a little note or go speak to the teacher, don't keep your children at home.' We set up a free breakfast programme and that helped, because the children are more alert in class, you see them run to school. Now the parents are really making the project work. The Principal stands on the shoulders of the parents in my two rural schools**.** What's most important is that parents have a knowledge of the education system, the community and the children know their rights.

At Ginger Hill we set up a computer skills project. I was trained and then I trained 16 more community members and one of the teachers. Two of the community members have got jobs after this, one as a cashier. Another has gone on to college, having discovered her ability. Some of the trainees have worked as volunteers in two neighbouring schools - though these weren't part of JAASP - training teachers and students to use their computers.

JAASP has helped me develop my potential, taken me to different places, helped me realise my dreams. This whole issue of community development, I didn't know how the community should take responsibility for the school. And resources – we look at us as a poor community but at the workshop we learned to realise all the resources we have around us. My contract is finished but you will never stop working for JAASP. What I've learned, I'll share with others. JAASP sent me on a 3-week project management course at UWI (University of the West Indies) in Kingston. We learnt to write proposals for funding and now we can put together well-organised proposals for the Basic School and Post Office projects. When I did my presentation the lecturer said 'Are you sure you don't have a first degree?' Now I've been offered a place on a foundation course leading to a degree in Social Studies. With the money I earned I've bought a piece of land. I have my roots here and these communities are my priority. I see JAASP as an on-going process – it can't be stopped."

Interview 17th November 2002

Component 2: School Management

Objectives

The focus of this component was on the importance of school management in the life of the school. One objective was to support the development of School Improvement Plans, which would be approved by key stakeholders and implemented effectively in all schools. Another was to support Principals in the development and use of appropriate management techniques. Additionally, the aim was to equip Principals with the skills to take responsibility for organising and conducting staff development within their own school and in school clusters.

Baseline

Wide differences were found between schools, both as regards the level of management skills of Principals and the extent to which teachers accessed and applied in-service training. There was a general lack of accountability in relation to school management and a low level of documentation and reporting. It was often difficult for teachers to attend training because of geographical distance and staffing restrictions; those that did benefit from workshops did not multiply the training among their colleagues. Both the Principal and individual teachers tended to work in isolation with little monitoring, shared planning or consultation with parents. Children's performance, as measured by national tests, did not form the basis for school planning or in-service training.

Main Activities

Training of Trainers: for Education Officers to support the training of Principals and School Improvement Action Groups

Training in School Improvement Planning (SIP): for Principal, Community Participation Facilitator, School Board representative and PTA / community representative who formed the School Improvement Action Groups

Participatory SIP: a variety of participatory techniques were used to discuss problems and solutions with parents, teachers, students and community members

Project funds: delegation of funds for minor rehabilitation works, teaching / learning resources and for community projects was implemented through school bank accounts

Training in Leadership and Management Skills: to support the development of problem-solving strategies and enable Principals to engage in peer mentoring

Further Training for Principals in SIP: to support the evaluation of the previous plans and the development of new 3-year plans (2002-2005)

Cluster Meetings for Principals: to share problems and progress with other JAASP schools

Performance Management Training for Principals: to equip Principals with skills to set up performance management systems that support teacher development through self-assessment, observation of teaching skills and sampling of records and students' work

Overall Impact

- Principals have developed confidence and motivation to engage effectively with teachers, students, parents and the community

- Principals feel empowered through the process of decision making necessitated by the use of devolved funding

- Principals have supported systems to facilitate curriculum development within the school, enabling teachers to operate as a team - with common planning time, opportunities for exchanging ideas from training workshops, developing shared strategies, resources and research.

- Principals and teachers have developed an understanding of the use of data in assessing progress and planning future action

- Principals and teachers are skilled in school improvement planning and many Principals are acting as mentors to non-JAASP Principals in their cluster

- Community members have greater faith in school management, due to increased involvement in decision-making, increased transparency and better communication

- Schools, communities and Education Officers have developed a focus on learning goals as opposed to simple action plans

"I find myself with a level of zeal that makes me always motivated to do anything to reap success. I find out that I am enjoying success in tasks accomplished and believing that I can take on more difficult ones. Every task I complete gives me a sense of pride and a drive to attack even harder ones. Now I no longer dream of improvement, I am working towards it. When I look at where my school is compared to where it was three years ago, I wonder how I got so much done, and it helps me to believe that nothing is impossible."

Before JAASP	After JAASP
Less than 50% of project schools with some kind of a school development plan. Plans focussed on activities rather than learning	All 48 project schools have a school improvement plan approved by stakeholders and the MOEYC All plans have a focus on learning goals All schools have used devolved funds to support implementation of SIP action strategies
In some schools only 5 parents turned up to PTA meetings	PTA numbers have risen in some schools by 500% Many teachers also hold regular Grade meetings with parents
Little or no school-based staff development	Regular staff development sessions in all schools Team planning happening in 75% project schools in regions 5 and 6 In 68% of project schools teachers are carrying out peer observation and demonstration lessons (regions 5 and 6)
Limited capacity in School Improvement Planning	75% of JAASP Principals are supporting SIP and other activities in non-JAASP schools (regions 5 and 6) 34 Education Officers trained to carry out regional SIP workshops 47 Principals and 8 EOs trained in Performance Management
Limited support for students' general health and well-being	28 out of 41 schools surveyed now provide lunch on Fridays to stimulate attendance Breakfast programmes are also in operation in some schools Schools have developed an average of 3 motivational activities to promote pupils' learning (eg clubs, schools council, sports etc) 38% project schools carry out regular health checks for students in regions 5 and 6

I could go out now and train anybody!

Mr Robinson is Principal of Chambers Penn All Age School (Hanover)
"We had a lot of things at the back of our mind but we weren't able to do them. At the first SIP training we could see there was something good ahead. We learnt about goals, strategies. Our previous plans were not of the same magnitude. We got other people involved. All this helped me to monitor what we were doing, to know our goals and how to achieve them. And receiving the funds gave me a push, I was frustrated before, but this gave me the courage – and a new interest. Everyone had an input – the PTA, School board, staff and the community. And parents started forming their own plans. With the new plan, everything was much easier. I got a feel from all the other groups – each group talked about problems (did their problem tree), the successes, their ideas. Then I put the plan together and had a general meeting to tell everybody. Before, the plans wouldn't involve so many people – this is what makes the plan work. For example, the computing lab – it's owned by the community, we have no security problems. Having responsibility for the funds has been very important. We monitor spending and see what we can do. There's open accountability, we report on spending to the community and the PTA. It gives us control over what we do and that gives us more confidence. The SPICE group also has responsibility – they've just got an invoice for the new fridge. JAASP has set the stage for a relationship we have never seen before. When we had our Fun Day, the whole community had a wonderful time. The school has moved a far way, the school is going places. I had the vision before but I didn't know it would be real."
Interview November 2002

The school is now 'sold'

Mrs Cynthia V Cunningham is Principal of Alderton All Age School (St Ann's)
"The quality of training in JAASP has really opened our eyes – it's like nothing we've had before. We have much more of a team spirit among the staff. Teachers are more open about sharing tasks and giving each other support. They'll discuss aspects of training: 'I have this problem – what do I do?' Teachers organise themselves and make decisions, we allocate roles and functions. Teachers are more willing to do overtime or to volunteer to write letters (for example preparing invitations to the Open Day on the computer). They're also more pro-active while I'm away – there was a call for SN screening and the pupils were taken down, I didn't need to be there.
We have cluster meetings for Principals and at the moment we're standardising Open Days for all the schools. Development planning has brought us closer together, we put our thoughts together, we relate better. We call each other about progress or problems or concerns and discuss solutions. 'Can you help me? How are you getting on?' We never did that before. And now other Principals are calling on us for help."
Interview November 2002

Component 3: Quality of Teaching and Learning

Objectives

The focus of this component was on staff development for all teachers in the project schools. Firstly this involved developing competence in teaching the revised Primary Curriculum (Grades 1 to 6) or competence in teaching the ROSE curriculum (Grades 7 to 9). The project also promoted the use of inter-active learner-centred methods in all classes, with a particular focus on the development of literacy and numeracy. The overall aim was to increase the level of student attainment in national tests by the end of the project and also to increase the number of students progressing to secondary school. JAASP was the first project in Jamaica to place an emphasis on the needs of students with exceptionalities (special learning needs) and the development of teaching skills and learning methods to meet these. In addition, the project sought to develop relationships between the All Age Schools and their feeder Basic Schools in order to ensure a smooth transition.

Baseline

Wide differences were found to exist between schools in terms of student performance. However, while some students (especially girls) were doing very well on national tests, many fell below the national average, particularly in the Grade 4 Literacy Test. The survey identified irregular attendance and poor discipline in the classroom as contributing factors. In addition, observation in 20 schools highlighted the fact that a majority of lessons were teacher-centred: characterised by a lack of interaction or variety in activity, with few, if any, practical, creative or problem-oriented tasks. The main focus in the Language Arts class was on reading and grammar and students had little opportunity for self-expression. Teachers had a limited range of materials to work with and, although there was evidence of lesson planning, there was less emphasis on methodology or on meeting individual student needs.

Main Activities

This was the busiest component and included the following:

Training Workshops: to develop teachers' skills in relation to: the new curricula, literacy, numeracy, special needs, learning support

Introduction of the Literacy Window: an hour every day for every class to focus on literacy development, using a range of materials and activities

School Resource Persons: allocation of special responsibilities to different staff members in each school, for Literacy, Numeracy, Special Needs, Facilitation

School-based Staff Development: regular sessions for multiplication from workshops; common planning time to develop strategies and materials; observation of other teachers' lessons

Special Needs Screening: schools have basic guidelines to identify potential special needs and those students identified are screened professionally

National Health Fairs: set up in collaboration with health and social service sectors, to provide special needs screening for Grade 1 students and, at the same time, advice and information to parents on nutrition, support services and early education

Parent Education Programmes: set up as part of the School Development Plan to provide parents with the motivation and skills to support their children's progress, many with a focus on adult literacy (particularly through computer classes)

Study Visits: visits to UK for small groups of key educators, to develop links and learn about good practice in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy, Special Needs and Guidance & Counselling

Sponsorship of Literacy Summer Camps: the project enabled 2 small schools per region to hold their own summer literacy camp, to ensure easy access for those students At Risk to attend without travelling to larger centres

Computer Training for Teachers: in all regions, to support classroom instruction

Joint Workshops for Grade 1 Teachers and Basic School Teachers: to look at analysis of the Grade 1 Inventory and develop strategies for adapting the curriculum to meet identified needs, with a focus on emergent literacy

Special Needs Training: for school-based resource persons, Principals and EOs in the Special Education Unit

Family Literacy (Reading Starts With Us): piloted in 9 schools mainly in Grade 1 classes: 61 families involved, 60 mothers and 8 fathers

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Small steps of progress

"I have changed my expectations of children. You know, a lot of the time teachers expect so much, but if you sit down and think what the child really needs, you'll do better. I always wanted a particular standard for most of the children but now I think about smaller groups. I now look for progress over time, this may be moving from reading 2 words to 3 words. I've learnt to look at and highlight little progresses like that. So I can help the students to improve, give them confidence, motivate them and help them excel."

Grade 3 and 4 Teacher, Maryland All Age School

Overall Impact

- Children are more responsive and disciplined, with a longer attention span and are more highly motivated to complete work and develop their own skills; there is more student interaction in class and more opportunity for open discussion with teachers

- Teachers feel more confident in applying an integrated approach, using a range of methods and materials - and have a greater sense of achievement in their work

- Group-work is used for a variety of tasks, for example, creative writing, science experiments, social science research, computer reports, with children working independently of the teacher

- Teachers plan differentiated work and use more effective grouping in class as well as more concrete tasks, to meet different needs and abilities

- Whole school strategies have been developed to tackle particular areas such as literacy and learning support with a focus on supporting diversity in the classroom

- A system of continuous assessment for each pupil has been introduced

- Literacy levels have improved both in the school and the community

- Teachers, Education Officers and parents have been sensitized to the need for early childhood education, screening and early intervention to address special needs

Through JAASP

61 teachers attended Grade 7-9 Curriculum workshops in 2000

Principals and Literacy Coordinators from all JAASP schools attended Literacy workshops in 2001

86 teachers and 10 EOs attended Curriculum workshops in 2001

46 teachers attended basic Special Needs training in 2001 and 40 of these trained in strategies to improve readiness by end of Grade 1 (2002) 43 Principals sensitised to Special Needs

63 teachers and 9 EOs attended Family Literacy workshops in 2002

69 teachers and 9 EOs attended Learning Support workshops in 2002

JAASP Literacy Coordinators and 11 EOs attended Literacy Coordination workshops in 2002

250 teachers and Principals attended Emergent Literacy workshops in 2003

Indicators of change

In some respects it is too early to note overall changes in attainment from looking at the national test results. This can be due to a number of factors: the introduction of the new curricula; characteristics of particular student cohorts; staffing problems; bad weather affecting attendance - as well as to the slow nature of change itself. In addition we currently only have reference to 2002 not 2003 results. It is also important to emphasise one lesson from the baseline study, that it is more productive to look at change within individual schools, which vary in size, starting point and rate of progress, rather than at aggregate averages across the project. There are many qualitative indicators which can be used to identify change, as well as case studies from individual schools or teachers, which highlight small but significant progress. Test results from two schools are given below as examples of statistics available.

School 1 (Clarendon) Grade 4 Literacy

	2000	**2002**
Boys Average Not At Risk	5%	41%
Girls Average Not At Risk	25%	50%
School Average Not At Risk	16%	45%

School 2 (St Ann) Grade 6 Achievement Test

	2000		**2002**	
	School average	National Average	School average	National Average
Maths	30	49	47	51
Science	41	54	54	53
Social Studies	40	55	52	53
Language	49	58	50	53.5
Communication Task	5.6	5.3	7.6	7.3

For the first time we have students passing at Grade 6

At **Chamber's Pen All Age School**, all the Grade 6 students passed the GSAT in 2002. This included a girl who had been identified as a 'slow learner' earlier in her schooling

Screening by Mico College Child Assessment and Research in Education Centre 2001

Total students screened	270
Age	6-15
Moderately intellectually impaired	260
Reading at Basic School level	206
Reading up to Grade 3 level	19
No measurable reading rating	13

The majority of students showed a delay of between 3 and 9 years in development. Recommendations included the need for
- Educating parents / guardians
- A stimulating home environment
- Special education classes in school
- Vocational skills training for these students
- Ensuring proper child nutrition to avoid problems in future
- Using multi-sensory and experiential learning approaches in class
- Further screening by medical specialists and social workers

Health screening 2002

Total JAASP students	7496
Total students screened (7%)	511
Defective vision	310
Dental problems	212
Defective hearing	107
Unsatisfactory medical health	91
Referred to MicoCARE	8

The numbers indicate that up to 200 children have 2 kinds of health problems (or a smaller number have multiple health problems).

"There is reason to subscribe to the position that all school age children, particularly in the early years, should be comprehensively evaluated, with special attention to testing of vision, hearing and fine motor skills (through) the establishment of more assessment facilities across the island adequately staffed by trained clinicians. This will go a long way in preventing later learning and related problems in the school population" MicoCARE Report for JAASP, 2001

Grade One Readiness Inventory Analysis 2002

Number of JAASP schools included	39
Students who attended a basic or infant school	All
Non Mastery in Sub-test Visual-Motor	18%
Non Mastery in Sub-test Letter/Number Knowledge	49%
Non Mastery in Sub-test Visual Perception	54%
Non Mastery in Sub-test Auditory Perception	66%

"The report is pointing to the need for early intervention. The next step would be to have screening done in other critical areas of development. It is suggested
- that multigrade teaching does not include Grade 1, especially where the percentage of non-mastery is so high
- the TEO be invited to share information from the GRI with a view to providing support and monitoring the Grade One programme
- to sensitize teachers to the need of using different strategies when working with a diverse group of students." Polly Bowes-Howell, Report 2002

JAASP come a we school

Me a go a school from me eye dey a me knee and me couldn't read and write. But thanks god for JAASP now me read everything me eye ketch pon.

Every day ali pickney dem laugh at me, me never know that me couldn't hear out of me left ear tell JAASP mek dem carry mi go doctor.
Him tell dim say me nah hear and treat me deaf ears. Now give thanks to JAASP me hear everything the teacher and pickney dem say.

You see de overhead projector a JAASP gi us. Now we can see all the different parts of we body a did so human body mek up. Tomorrow if you come up a school me show you how you heart a pump – bum, bum, bum.

Mi father could nah read fi help me with me homework. Him attend the literacy class down a school. Now as me go home him is the first fi read what me write at school.

You see me computers a JAASP gi we fi me mum a whey couldn't read. Go learn fi use de computer and now nobody can read like she.

Me did have learning disability, every teacher say me dunce. JAASP carry me go a doctor, him say a no dunce but me need some more medication. I went to the pharmacy me teacher buy it and give me. Me chile – now me is the brightest one in me class.

Poem by Children from Regions 3 and 5, Ocho Rios Workshop, November 2002

Why don't you come and observe me?

"I'm thinking of one of the older Grade 1 teachers who was very weak at the beginning of the project. I was amazed at her performance when I last visited. She was thrilled to show off to me what she could do, she'd made her own materials and got the children manipulating things. She was using the children's ideas to build up a chart in Maths. Then they were able to get on with independent work. The pace of the lesson was good...
The other teachers in that school are much more confident and enthusiastic, too, they were complaining that I didn't go and observe them!
Patt Flett, Technical Advisor

Energy is all around us

At **Alderton All Age School** the Grade 6 class is sitting outside under a tree, studying Science.
Teacher: Can you see the leaves moving in the breeze? What can you tell me about that?
Students: That's energy
Teacher: Now what if a mango falls to the ground?
Students: That's energy.
(A dog barks in the distance)
Student: That's sound! That's energy too.
(All laugh)

I know he couldn't have done that before

At Iron's Mountain All Age School the staff got together to develop ways of identifying children with special learning needs and strategies to help them. There are slow learners in each grade. "They are shy in front of other children and hardly want to talk. We use concrete things to get them to talk freely and don't correct at the time. We have a discussion all together in the class and then give children different tasks. They work in the mainstream but the tasks are simpler. Sometimes the activity is difficult and they can't work independently. In Science they can tell you things but can't write it down. So we assess them in groupwork and leave the written part."(Grade 6 Teacher)

In Grade 4 there are some simple sentences written by slow learners on card and pinned on the wall. The teacher told me: "I read a story book with the group of slow learners and we discuss it. Then I give them each one word and ask them to make their own sentence. This little boy couldn't write. I gave him 'boy' and he wrote 'The boy is running.' These are small but significant steps for the children. And it's also important to recognise the small steps that we make ourselves, as teachers."

Monitoring Visit, November 2002

Children work either in groups or on individually differentiated tasks

"But it is not my child writing like that!"
"Yes it is and he is doing it for himself!"

Student-Student Mentoring

At **Village All Age School** students who are better at reading act as mentors. This is what they do:
- Help other students with their reading
- Help them with the sound of the letter
- Help them to type on the computer
- Introduce them to books which is base on the lesson
- Teach them to speak properly
- Introduce other to the educational game from the project

Children at Ocho Rios Workshop, November 2002

Component 4: Strengthening Regional and National

Objectives

A key element in the sustainability of the gains of the project is the strengthening of regional and national systems in order to provide continued training and support for: improved teaching and learning; guidance and counselling; special needs; school management; and parental / community involvement. This capacity relates not only to continued involvement in JAASP schools but also to the scaling up of successful project innovations / interventions at a regional and national level. In particular, this objective will be evaluated by the production and implementation of Regional Development Plans, indicating future activities for training, staff development, data collection and management for the respective regions. An additional aspect of this component is the establishment of regional Resource Centres to support staff and school development.

Baseline

A major area of concern was the amount of time that had to be spent by Education Officers in a range of data collection from schools, without having the skills or opportunity to analyse and use the data effectively in their work. Education Officers felt they did not have sufficient time for providing school support and in-service training or monitoring the implementation of school development plans. Demands on Community Relations Education Officers to provide Parenting and Life Skills workshops were very heavy and often could not be met, as there is only one CREO per region and there was also a lack of material resources to support this area of work.

Main Activities

Collaborative working at regional level: designated Education Officers from each region in an on-going relationship with JAASP and involved in project activities, as participants in training workshops, acting as trainers, supporting implementation on the ground, contributing to project design and evaluation

Collaborative working at central level: close relationship with central MOEYC units, in particular the Professional Development Unit and the Core Curriculum Unit, in the development and execution of training

Consolidation and multiplication of innovation: through EOs and Principals working with clusters of JAASP and non-JAASP schools

Training Manuals: designed, piloted, revised and published to support all key areas of the project, including pastoral care and Special Needs

Study visits to UK: for Regional Directors and officers from regional and central units, to exchange good practice and develop links with UK colleagues and institutions in relation to Special Needs, Community Relations, Guidance and Counselling, Numeracy, Literacy, Management Systems

Regional Development Planning: supported by training for Regional Directors, along similar lines to the School Development Planning process, using a participatory approach and the involvement of key stakeholders

Resource Centres: support has so far been provided for establishing local resource centres to serve all schools in 3 regions (Hanover, St Ann's and St Elizabeth). All REOs have identified and received support to enhance their regional office resources

Support for Literacy Research and Development Centres: at Bethlehem and Moneague Teachers Colleges, to support the Literacy and Language Arts programmes to better equip teachers for the future

Regional vehicles: each region was provided with an additional 4-wheel drive vehicle which facilitated EO visits to schools, teacher attendance at workshops and better communication between schools and Regional Education Offices, in particular making it easier to hold rural as opposed to urban activities

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"I became an EO in September 2002 so I am still learning … Through attending JAASP training in SIP and literacy this year, my perceptions about the job have changed – I now see myself as a facilitator, not just an advisor or someone who knows everything and tells people what to do."

"JAASP has shown the importance of involvement and capacity building for EOs - if we are to continue to support new educational developments."

Conference Report

The Moneague College Literacy Research and Development Centre hosted its first conference on January 7-9, 2003 at the Golden Seas Beach Resort, in Oracabessa. The conference was sponsored by the Jamaica All Age Schools Project (JAASP). The theme for the conference was **Jamaican Literacy Research and Development Centres: Promoting Partnership, Best Practices and Performance**. Participants and presenters included officers in the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture, University of the West Indies and Joint Board of Teacher Education, JAASP, Oakland University, college lecturers, classroom teachers and students currently enrolled in the literacy programme at both Moneague and Bethlehem colleges.

Mr Wesley Barrett, Chief Education Officer, in declaring the conference open, suggested that a literate society is important to problem solving. He recognized the need for greater funding and support for the literacy centres to ensure sustainability. Mrs Adele Brown, Deputy Chief Education Officer, outlined the Ministry's vision of the centres as providing diagnostic and remediation services, research facilities and community outreach.

The overall comments from the evaluative exercise suggest that there is a need to have a conference of this nature more frequently... during this forum educators would be able to reflect on and clarify literacy issues, arrive at solutions and forge greater links among colleges, business and international organizations, and also share best practices.

from The Gleaner

Overall Impact

- The JAASP School Improvement Planning process has been adopted by the MOEYC for all Primary / All Age Schools in Jamaica and training in the SIP process has been carried out by a team of Education Officers for Principals island-wide

- CREOs are better equipped to provide support and training for parental involvement in education, school / community partnerships, community development and private sponsorship in all 6 regions

- School Literacy Coordinators have been trained to provide on-going support for literacy development in their own schools and are able to multiply innovations such as the Literacy Window and Family Literacy to non-JAASP schools.

- EOs have a sense of ownership in the project and are motivated to ensure sustainability of the gains

- The principle of participation and involvement of all stakeholders in educational improvement has been widely accepted and underpins new practice (for example, the Regional Directors insisted 'we have to go back and involve everyone' before producing their regional plans)

- Regional Guidance and Counselling officers providing more support for pastoral care in rural schools

- Training in facilitation skills has been has been provided for EOs and Resource Teachers to support future school-based professional development activities

- An MOEYC Data Planning Committee has been established to develop a system for meeting the data needs for educational planning at national, regional and school level

- Awareness raised about special needs and planning for managing special needs in the classroom, in all regions, among Education Officers, teachers from Special Schools and NGOs operating Special Schools, in addition to JAASP Principals and Special Needs Coordinators

- A new Maths Policy has been drafted

- The Early Childhood Unit is looking at the results of the Emergent Literacy pilot with all regions as part of the National Literacy Strategy

- Other MOEYC projects have benefited from incorporating or considering the processes, approaches and materials developed through JAASP, for example, in the areas of School Improvement Planning, Action Research and Literacy

Through JAASP

73 (non-JAASP) Education Officers trained to carry out training of Principals in School Improvement Planning

17 teachers and 9 EOs trained as trainers of school-based Resource Teachers in Facilitation Skills

30 EOs and MOEYC officers trained in Regional Planning, including 5 Regional Directors

12 EOs in Region 5 trained in Performance Management for schools

12 EOs trained in community mobilisation and parental involvement

8 JAASP schools, 17 feeder Basic Schools, 2 officers from the Early Childhood Unit and 1 EO from Region 1 involved in piloting Emergent Literacy strategies

75% of JAASP Literacy Coordinators multiplying literacy development strategies in their school

13 Principals attended a conference in Cuba to share experiences with other Caribbean practitioners on the changing context of education in the region

Support to Core Curriculum Unit in the revision of the Multi-Grade Manual as well as workshops in multigrade teaching for 16 teachers and 6 EOs

1 regional study centre operational (Hanover) 1 in the process of being built (St Elizabeth) and 1 in the process of being established (St Ann's)

Educators in a practical activity in an emergent literacy workshop (acting out The Three Billy Goats Gruff)

"JAASP has picked up on things that were already starting to happen and they have run with it, providing support for proper development – and now other projects are picking up the idea as well (for example, the emergent literacy strategy) "

We are also beneficiaries

"What is different about JAASP is that it opens up to all stakeholders and everyone is a beneficiary, EOs, JAASP schools, non-JAASP schools... Community involvement has been particularly important, giving the project a different dimension - parents asking questions at meetings, making decisions about the need for a Basic School, planning **for learning,** not just a concern with the physical building, developing ownership of the school. JAASP as a project understands that different schools have different needs, so letting stakeholders plan their own programme, giving access to funds and making Principals accountable, this has been a bottom-up, school-centred, holistic approach to development. EOs know about JAASP – that's not the case with other projects – and Ministry units are also involved. JAASP has shown respect for what was already there, it's built on that and strengthened it. The project provided a framework but we were able to move pieces around to fit better. The Technical Advisors have been like members of the team, supporting our work. The level of participation of EOs has been important in the process and the project has had an impact on that as well, getting more EOs involved. In particular, the Principals now have real skills and can share their leadership training and act as mentors for others. JAASP schools are presenting their achievements and ideas to non-JAASP schools and developing new partnerships with the private sector to publish their own newsletter or get help in computer training. Learning for everyone has been firmly on the front burner."

Ramadhin Bailey, Sonia Madden, Hyacinth Stern and Sylvia Henry

JAASP has changed the way I am able to do things

The new Diploma in Literacy and Language Arts was started in 2000 at Bethlehem and Moneague Teachers Colleges. JAASP provided books and equipment to help establish the Literacy Development Centres and technical advice in an on-going collaboration. Student teachers are able to work on practical tasks with a wide range of resources as an integral part of their studies and in preparation for teaching practice. At Bethlehem the resources are also used by other departments as well as by schoolchildren from nearby schools who are scheduled to come into the centre weekly for individual support. There is now a plan to bring together the Primary Education and the Continuing Education sides of the college through developing Family Literacy classes at the Centre, initially for ancillary staff. The college has worked with JAASP through membership of the JAASP Regional Coordinating Committee in St Elizabeth. The JAASP Principals in the parish requested the college to send student teachers to JAASP schools and the Literacy Centre took up the challenge. As this was the first time that the remote rural schools had hosted student teachers, the schools were very welcoming. The students, who were at first worried about the placement, were boarded with local families, through support from JAASP, and enjoyed the experience a great deal. Supervisors were able to reach the schools with the use of the JAASP vehicle. It was a surprise for the student teachers to find that JAASP schools were better equipped than more prominent schools in the parish and that teachers were already using many of the innovative practices in literacy development that they had learned at college, so the experience was mutually reinforcing. On completion of the diploma those students who return to rural communities to teach will have an important impact on educational development in the area, which has the lowest literacy rate island-wide.

Visit to Bethlehem Teachers College, April 2003

Component 5: Teaching and Learning Resources

Objectives

The objective was to ensure not only that each school had an appropriate level of teaching and learning resources to meet curriculum needs but also that teachers were able to use books and equipment effectively. Schools were given responsibility for assessing resource needs and for procurement of resources, as well as planning access to, and equitable use of, resources.

Baseline

Most schools had limited resources and equipment. Lessons usually took place with children sitting in rows and copying from the chalkboard. Classroom walls were bare and books often kept under lock and key for security reasons. Only a small number of schools had a computer and this tended to be in the Principal's office.

Main Activities

Provision of Reading Books: each school received a large box of 300 new reading books from the project

Computers: each school received 3 new computers from the project, with a range of software and a printer

Planning and Procurement: as part of their School Development Planning, each school identified the need for further resources and were allocated funds to procure these

Establishing Learning Centres: each school developed a space for a library and computing laboratory so that the new resources could be used by all students and teachers

Development of School-based Resources: as well as individual teachers making their own materials, schools have set up systems to share, copy and store teacher-made resources so that all staff have access to them

Literacy Centres: teaching materials and equipment were also provided to Moneague and Bethlehem Teachers Colleges

Overall Impact

- Children, teachers and parents have all been highly motivated by the provision of new reading books and computers: these are what everyone mentions first in relation to project impact since they provide interest, variety and the stimulus for all to improve their skills

- The higher level of resourcing has enabled teachers to plan much more effectively for different needs and abilities; individual students can more easily work at their own speed and level and monitor their own progress

- Parents have become more involved in their children's education, through books the children take home to read and through access to computers

- Schools have acquired a range of materials, from textbooks and reference books to computer software (science, social studies, problem-solving adventure stories)

- Teachers have been motivated to produce their own puppets, charts, posters, board-games as learning aids which also decorate the classroom, as well as copying and storing worksheets and tests for future use

- Children can research topics on CD, present their work on computer, print it off and have it displayed on the classroom wall for others to read, enjoy and learn from

- The teaching of Mathematics has become more effective, with the use of concrete objects and children writing their own problems for others to solve

- Where classes are time-tabled to use the computers, absenteeism on Fridays has decreased

Establishing reading corners with new books has encouraged boys to read more

Part of a powerpoint presentation produced by students at Clapham All Age School (St Ann)

But I never knew I could write so

At **Clapham All Age School (St Ann's)** children from Grade 6, working in mixed groups of girls and boys, demonstrated their skills in using the computer. They had prepared powerpoint slide shows about the school and presented these to me with confidence and pride. The students are skilled in collaborative work in science and creative writing. They can perform the following with ease: word processing, importing pictures into documents, layout, printing and saving their work.

A group of students from Grades 4 – 7 at **Minto All Age School (St Thomas)** told me the following:

"I learnt about what is a computer. The computer is a stationary thing because it don't move at one place. I like computer because it has many games and it help us to find out about many things. We learn how to write stories and letters. We learn about meteorologists. We also play games and make cartoons. We learn to jump and run with Mario. When we play computer we have fun and we draw Doyen and Kimberlin. We can learn to sen post to other school."

Monitoring visit, November 2002

We're creating a reading public

"The biggest success story is raising the literacy level and that's because of the reading books. They grab the children's attention, they're so excited. The children love the colourful books, they love the stories. They can read the pictures, even though they can't put it all in writing, they can relate the story. They're talking more, expressing themselves. Now the children are reading at home, every evening they take a library book to read. There are enough books for everyone to be able to read at their own level. And there's a wide variety. The children select their own books because they can see what is the right level for them. But they also push themselves to improve their level, each week they select more difficult books because they're so interested in reading. On Fridays they take turns to read to the rest of the class and give a short report. Children are spending less time playing and more time reading now, even at lunchtime, they'll go into the library in small groups. And parents have started reading too – they want to find out 'What's so interesting?' As part of the Family Literacy programme (in Grade 1) each parent can take a story book home, to read with their child, and they also do a report on the book for the other parents."

Literacy Coordinators

Component 6: Rehabilitation Works

Objectives

As part of the School Development Plan all school communities identified minor rehabilitation works that were necessary to raise the standard of the physical learning environment to an acceptable level and to make adequate provision for children's health and welfare. The aim was to make the school a comfortable and attractive place for use by teachers, students and community members. Each school was allocated funds to carry out minor works and took responsibility for planning and contracting out the work.

Baseline

Most schools were in a state of physical neglect, with battered furniture and several classes operating in the same space with only a chalkboard between them. Many had no proper staffroom or library. There was general dissatisfaction among all stakeholders regarding the school environment and maintenance and the poor state of the toilet blocks was an issue highlighted particular by students.

Main Activities

School Beautification: community members helped by painting the outside of the school, planting flower-beds and decorating the walls with murals; erection of new fences

Computing Labs: developing or building a suitable space for the Computing Lab involved attention to electrical wiring, security and health and safety issues

Reading Corners / School Libraries: to house new books and games and to provide a space for quite reading, group research tasks and shared reading

Improving School Kitchens / Canteens: new stoves were bought and installed to make the kitchens more efficient in providing breakfast and lunch; new eating areas were established

Refurbishing Classrooms: work included putting in partitions to separate classes, cutting down on interruptions and noise; new furniture was provided - for the children, a desk and chair for the teacher, bookshelves for new resources

Community Centres: development of existing premises to provide space for community education

Other improvement works included:
> **Playing Fields:** improvement of outside areas for games and sports
> **Staff Rooms:** furnished areas for staff to work, hold meetings and store materials
> **Toilet Blocks:** new blocks were constructed or existing ones renovated
> **Water tanks:** to improve water supply

Overall Impact

- Working in a more attractive physical environment has provided all stakeholders with a greater sense of self-esteem and motivation

- Participation in planning and carrying out work has given all stakeholders a sense of ownership and responsibility for the school

- Contracts for minor works - building, furniture, electrical wiring - has provided employment for local trades-people

- The school has become, both in perception and reality, a resource for the whole community

- Teaching and learning has become more effective, through refurbishing classrooms, better access to books and equipment and new learning spaces

We've moved into the 21st century

"Twenty-five parents have been trained in computer skills so far. The world is computerised, everyone is interested, even addicted, because it's fun! It's got parents visiting the school more, they come during the daytime to see if they can use the Computing Lab. And they're taking more interest in what their children are doing, they want to know what's going on at school, especially fathers are coming in to ask about their children's performance and behaviour."
Parent, Minto All Age School

"Refurbishing took place within the school: fans, sealed roof, painting, doors, cupboards, fancy blocks on the outer walls, utensils for canteen, painting the heroes on school wall, new court for sports, we bought computer and equipment for home and family center (stove etc.) Tank bought to improve water situation.
Each class now has library."
Community member, Comfort Castle All Age School

"The school had a facelift over the summer
and the teachers had a facelift when they came back and saw it"

Component 7: Lesson Learning

Objectives

An important element in sustaining the gains of the project was to ensure that local capacity was developed for lesson learning and sharing. One way that this could be achieved was through the participation of a wide range of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation activities. Another strategy was the integration of action research into the project, providing support for small-scale action research projects, through which individual schools identified a particular problem and worked collaboratively to solve this. Finally, the intention was to share good practice with non-project schools and so stimulate the wider use of successful project innovations.

Baseline

Individual teachers and individual project schools tended to work in isolation, often with little access to new ideas and practices and a lack of opportunity for discussion and experimentation. Decision-making was a top-down process, which did not involve stakeholders as equal partners, with valid perspectives, in educational development. Educational research by the University of the West Indies and Teachers Colleges was restricted in the field to those schools which were most easily accessible (that is, not in remote rural areas). The project was designed to redress inequalities in all these aspects.

Main Activities

Baseline Study and Community Survey: carried out at the beginning of the project in 20 schools, involving questionnaires, classroom observation and focus group discussions with students, teachers, members of the School Board, PTA and the rest of the community

Monitoring mechanisms: progress has been overseen by a National Steering Committee and 6 Regional Coordinating Committees; annual monitoring visits by the University of Wolverhampton have involved discussions with a wide range of stakeholders in schools, communities and Regional Education Offices

Training in Action Research: all project schools, a number of Education Officers, staff from Teachers Colleges and Community Participation Facilitators have had basic training in action research and a training guide to Action Research is in use

Dissemination: at all levels, through School Open Days, school and project newsletters, workshops, meetings, school cluster groups, videos, training manuals, national and international conferences and publications

Overall Impact

- A culture of learning has been developed. Regular sharing of lessons learned takes place within and between schools and communities and between regions. There is an ethos of open-ness, exploration and experimentation, a recognition of continuing personal and professional development, as opposed to 'right or wrong' quick answers and simple solutions

- Action research projects in 15 schools have been successfully completed and documented. These relate to innovative approaches to literacy teaching; community projects; improving participation of boys in education. Projects have helped raised awareness of specific problems and ways of addressing them but, perhaps more importantly, the process itself has been important for developing reflective practice among teachers

- Year 2 student teachers from Moneague also carried out an action research project to tackle reading difficulties with the Read Aloud Strategy with Grade 4 students in another of the JAASP schools in St Ann's

- Schools have been able to share activities and success stories through the JAASP newsletter

- JAASP Literacy Coordinators have successfully multiplied the Family Literacy scheme to non-JAASP schools in Region 4

- A small-scale link project has been started with the hope of connecting JAASP schools and schools in North Wales, to share learning between teacher educators, teachers, student teachers and school students beyond the life of the project

- Education Officers closely associated with JAASP have been involved in reflecting on the impact of the project, particularly as regards its impact on MOEYC, with a view to publishing a report

Sample of Action Research Projects

School	Topic	For whom	By whom
Fruitful Vale	Parental awareness and attendance	74 targeted truants from all Grades	Principal and all teachers
Waltham	Nutritional meals	All students and teachers	Principal
Alderton	Community Literacy	Community members	Principal and teachers
Mount Hannah	Improving numeracy	Targeted failing students (boys) in all grades	All teachers
Happy Grove	Developing literacy through sports	6 boys in Grade 4	Sports Coordinator
Mount Providence	Involving fathers	Fathers	Principal and teachers
Prickly Pole	Literacy development	5 students in Grade 3	Grade 3 teacher

The entire learning process moves on

Action Research is an appropriate and powerful propeller for boys who are underachievers, since generally boys like 'action'. It is particularly suitable for grades 4 to 6 and grades 7 to 9 in schools where the student population is comprised of 80-90% boys, as is our case at Morgan's Pass All Age School. Can you imagine a class full of boys in a co-ed institution or just one girl among the boys? This is a challenge indeed! Yes, action research is an excellent challenge for teachers. Sometimes it's not what we try to 'put in' that matters to students, but what we are able to 'get out'. Many of our students are battered and bruised emotionally from parental neglect and verbal / physical abuse. They are hurting and bleeding inside. They are starving for love, acceptance and belonging. They need to begin to discover themselves, what they are worth and what they can do. Some have no intrinsic motivation to perform, achieve and excel, yet they have great potential. It is these children that Action Research has come to rescue.

This special group of students chosen for an Action Research programme are characterised as: not achieving over-all; will not stay in class; will not do/produce any work; never complete any written assignment; not attending school regularly; have very low self-esteem; not liked in class; show no interest in anything; think and talk negatively; are destructive, disruptive, aggressive, abusive or annoying to others.

Action Research requires careful planning and preparation; quality time; ability to use all available resources – human, natural, material, including electronic devices; patience and tolerance; background knowledge of each student's circumstance; empathy; and resilience. When all is ready for 'action' it's like taking a trip for which you're well-equipped.

Starting from the known into the unknown, the implementation of the programme begins with a combination of interests and known potential. then the entire learning process moves on: discovering, collecting, designing, constructing, drawing, painting, composing, performing, entertaining, measuring, recording, calculating, writing, experimenting, researching, interviewing, cooking, baking and preserving. In all of this the teacher is learning:
1. about his/her students
2. with his/her students
3. from his/her students

Faced with a class of grade 6 boys who were performing below grade level, I made an investigation into the problem of under-achievement. Among the many causes were:
 low self-esteem; inadequate supervision at home; poor economic circumstances resulting in a lack of resources at home; relationship problems at home; frequent absences from school; peer-pressure – resulting in truancy, hiding from class and disruptive behaviour in class.

On completion of the field study a problem statement was formulated:
An investigation into whether selected strategies targeting students' interest in music, craft and sports will enhance literacy and numeracy among a group of boys at Morgan's Pass

The next task was to formulate a programme of intervention which included skills training, physical development (sports), academic/ intellectual development and language arts. The implementation process was a challenging, exciting and rewarding experience. It was a great delight to see those boys come alive and assert themselves and demand quality time to achieve the goals set by themselves. We pursued an intensive programme of work touching most areas of the curriculum. The students were so motivated they worked long hours after school and on weekends.

Students would come to school with enthusiasm and eagerly awaited when cricket would be 'on the air' so they could listen and at the end of the broadcast discuss where players come from and locate places on the maps. We spoke of the different cultures in the different places. We would also talk about the pitch, its size and preparation and what was required to make it. We made up songs and poems about the matches as well as discussed and analysed the different 'plays'. We drew from memory, made collages and other items synonymous to the 'games'.

As they achieved and grew, the change was so dramatic that all the skeptics had to acknowledge the progress. The boys surpassed the girls in poetry and singing over a very short period of time. Their parents also became more caring and supportive. Those boys became one proud team of achievers and the envy of all the other students. Every boy in the group showed all-round improvement.

Many of the prohibitive problems identified early in the process were addressed. The intent is to extend the programme to include most of the boys and also include the girls from grade 4 up to grade 6.

Errol Bailey, Principal, Morgan's Pass All Age School

Morgan's Pass All-Age Football Team

Social Development Issues and their Contribution to Success

Access

Constraints to access are normally looked at in terms of 'demand-side' and supply-side'. In the context of JAASP 'demand-side' factors related to the value parents placed on education and the economic constraints of sending children to school - both direct costs such as uniform or books and indirect costs such as the need for children's support for the family's economic activities. 'Supply-side' factors relate to the quality of education on offer and its perceived relevance to employment opportunities in the future.

By bringing school and community closer together, the project was able to bridge the gap between demand and supply factors. Parents became better informed about education, they were able to develop more equitable relationships with teachers and, most importantly, they had a voice in shaping school development plans. Through joint school/community projects such as breakfast programmes, school gardens and farms, economic hardship was addressed in the key area of child nutrition.

In addition, the impact of improving the school environment and the provision of new resources and equipment cannot be underestimated. This part of the process gave community members a sense of official recognition and heightened their self-esteem, to be, after years of apparent neglect, moving into the 21st century along with the rest of Jamaica. Both contributing to school beautification programmes and benefiting from community learning projects, meant increased access by parents to the school and this has had a knock-on effect on them valuing education for their children.

The willingness and capacity of the Principal to engage with the community was perceived as a key factor in success. The desirability of training Principals in community development, along with the Community Participation Facilitators at the outset of the project, was belatedly recognised. Principals did, however, become aware of the importance of working with the community through other mechanisms and training was later provided to help sustain gains in this area.

Equity and Quality

Increased levels of resourcing have had a visible impact on the quality of education available in JAASP schools - and on the motivation of both students and teachers. Another factor, which has contributed to reducing inequity between rural remote schools and other schools island-wide, has been the extensive training programme available for JAASP teachers, equipping them with the skills and confidence to use new resources effectively and creatively in their classrooms. An equally important factor in the equation has been the intrinsic motivation of the majority of JAASP teachers and Principals: 'the genuine desire to improve' as one project worker put it. The staff in JAASP schools, who themselves had felt neglected for many years, have benefited from the 'push from the

outside' which the project provided, the training 'opened their eyes' and they felt empowered to 'realise their own vision'.

The creation of true equity can only come about through the recognition and celebration of diversity. The specific needs of individual schools were supported through the project's flexible approach. Similarly, the capacity of schools to identify and meet the specific needs of individual students was developed by the project. As the first project to integrate a Special Educational Needs focus, it made a big impact through screening of students; raising awareness of different needs also increased teachers' skills and commitment in a child-centred approach to teaching and learning. The project has highlighted the importance of recognising and celebrating small steps of progress in both student and teacher performance.

The poor attendance and performance of boys, in comparison with girls, and the much larger number of boys in All Age Schools, were issues identified at the beginning of the project. Gender-disaggregated statistics were collected throughout, in order to monitor this aspect. Greater attention was paid to the interest of boys and enhancing their performance, through different classroom tasks and activities. The wider range of reading material and use of computer software provided both sexes with the opportunity to follow up a range of interests and especially had an impact on the motivation of boys. Students also began to work successfully in mixed sex groups, laying a foundation for different gender relations for the future. Some inroads have also been made into the involvement of fathers, particularly through computer classes and the establishment of Fathers' Clubs – although it is true to say that women and mothers are the still the majority of community members involved in JAASP activities.

Participation and Sustainability

Motivation and confidence has been increased through the participatory approach, which was a key feature of all activities, processes and mechanisms. Participation enabled stakeholders to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for the project as well as a sense of pride in its achievements. This meant that when one key player was absent, or left, other players were able to continue the process. Thus, while leadership is important, it is not necessarily the only factor in successful development. Stakeholders at various levels have expressed a belief in their capacity to sustain the gains of the project: 'once you've perfected your craft, it's difficult to regress.'

However, because of the devolvement of responsibility for many activities, there has been a constant need for monitoring and support on the ground. Given the variety and breadth of activities involved, it is likely there will be a continued need for support after the end of the project, although much has been achieved towards ensuring autonomous school-based development mechanisms. Three years has been a short period in which to achieve change and all involved have made an important additional commitment in terms of their own time. Education Officers will still have a key rôle to play in ensuring sustainability in project schools and the promotion of lesson learning island-wide, with continued support from MOEYC towards institutionalising key processes.

The project has highlighted the importance of a holistic approach to education, which takes into account economic, health and social factors. As well as enabling partnerships

between school and community, between schools and Regional Education Offices, it has also promoted partnerships with the private sector and with other public sector departments, in order to help sustain school and community development in remote rural Jamaica.

A Holistic Approach

In summary, we would argue that each of the seven components made a fundamental contribution to the success of the project; one reason for this is that the same principles of participation and ownership underpinned all components. The key factor in success was that the project started from the school and its community and worked upwards. It was through taking a flexible, holistic approach that the JAASP project was able to identify new needs and opportunities and to integrate these into the process, as evidenced by the important unplanned outcomes.

Further Publications

The following publications providing more in-depth analysis of specific aspects of the project are in preparation:

Community Participation and Beneficiary Assessment
Aldin Bellinfantie

School Development Planning and School Management
Patt Flett

Approaches to Teaching Literacy
Kevin Walsh

Action Research
Dasmine Kennedy

Special Needs
Patricia Johnson

The Rôle of Participation in Change
Mary Surridge

The Impact of Study and Link Visits
Ray Mace

Reports, Training Materials and Conference Papers

JAASP PROJECT REPORTS

Q1 First Quarterly Report Project Management June 2000

Q2 Second Quarterly Report Project Management Oct 2000

Q3 Third Quarterly Report Project Management Mar 2001

Q4 Fourth Quarterly Report Project Management June 2001

Q6 Report for 6th Quarter Project Management Sept 2001

Q7 Report for 7th Quarter Project Management Dec 2001

Q8 Report for 8th Quarter Project Management Mar 2002

Q9 Report for 9th Quarter Project Management June 2002

Q10 Report for 10th Quarter Project Management Oct 2002

CONSULTANCY REPORTS

C1 *Baseline Study Preparation* Pat Daniel May 2000

C2 *ICT and Study Centres* Ray Surridge June 2000

C3 *Baseline Study* Pat Daniel June 2000

C4 *Integration of Gender* Pat Daniel June 2000

C5 *Community Participation Facilitator Training* Carol Narcisse Sept 2000

C6 *Project Cycle Management and Logframe Review* Phil Dearden Nov 2000

C7 *Finance* John Mace Nov 2000

C8 *Report on the Baseline Study* Pat Daniel, Patt Flett, Kevin Walsh,
Aldin Bellinfantie Nov 2000

C9 *SIP Training* Andy Borthwick and Sarah Thomas Nov 2000

C10 *CREO Training* Janice Jackson April 2001

C11 *JAASP Data Base* Karen Wilson Dec 2000

C13 *Link Exchange* Ray Mace and Geoff Hampton May 2001

C14 *Action Research Workshops* John Mace and Pat Daniel June 2001

C15 *Monitoring* Pat Daniel June 2001

C16 *Public Private Partnership Enterprise* Bob Hunter and Bob Marshall
June 2001

C17 *Social Development Review* Pat Daniel and Linnette Vassell Nov 2001

C18 *Gender Workshop* Dr. Barbara Bailey Jan 2002

C19 *Family/Community Literacy and Learning Support* Liz Millman Feb 2002

C20 *Literacy Training* Anne Derry April 2002

C21 *Action Research* Dasmine Kennedy July 2002

C22 *Special Needs Screening* Dennis Edwards July 2001

C23 *Analysis of Grade 1 Readiness Inventory* Dr Polly Bowes-Howell Nov 2002

C24 *Second Monitoring Visit* Pat Daniel Nov 2002

TRAINING MATERIALS

JAASP Application Instructional Manual Karen Wilson Nov 2000

Action Research A Simple Practical Approach for Classroom Teachers Dasmine Kennedy Jan 2002

Action Research at Morgan's Pass (Video) Feb 2002

School Improvement Planning A Participatory Approach Patt Flett 2002

SPICE Trainers' Manual Aldin Bellinfantie 2001

A Guide for Schools – Involving Parents and the Community in the School

Aldin Bellinfantie 2002

Literacy In-service Training Programme Parts 1 and 2 (Trainer's Guide, Participants' Guides, CD-ROM and Video) Kevin Walsh 2002 /3

Facilitator Training for School Based Resource Persons Patt Flett 2003

Special Needs (Video and Pack) Patricia Johnson 2003

Performance Management Patt Flett 2003

NEWS LETTERS

JAASP News Letter Feb 2001

JAASP News Letter June 2002

STUDY VISIT REPORTS

Regional Managers LEA Link Exchange Nov 2001

Literacy Study Visit June 2001

Community Relations Education Officers Visit March 2002

Special Needs Study Group June 2002

Maths, Numeracy, Computing Group Oct 2002

Guidance and Counselling Group Sept 2002

LINK VISIT REPORTS

Javed Khan (Management) Birmingham Local Education Authority Oct 2002

Jessica Clapham (Literacy) University of Bangor Nov 2002

Brian Barkway, Birmingham Local Education Authority and Penny Penn-Howard, Sandwell Local Education Authority (Regional Strengthening) Feb 2003

Graham Smart (Numeracy) National Literacy Strategy Midlands Regional Manager Feb 2003

Irene Cordon, Susan Finney, Jacqueline Wadlow and Jennifer Simpson (Special Needs) April 2003

MINUTES

National Steering Committee Meetings 2001-3

Regional Coordinating Committee Meetings 2001-3

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Clapham, J.J. (2003) *Trainee Teachers' Attitudes towards Creole and Standard English in Jamaica*, Jamaican Literacy Research and Development Centres: Promoting Best Practices and Performance, conference organised by Moneague Teachers College, UWI Institute of Education and JAASP, Oracabessa, Jamaica, January 2003

Cunningham, C., Bennett, A., Edwards, M. and Johnson, P. (2003) *The Jamaica All Age Schools Project in the Context of the Jamaican Education System*, Pedagogia 2003, Havana, Cuba, 3rd-7th February 2003

Flett, P. and Johnson, P. (2003) A *Participatory Approach to School Improvement Planning: Roads to Success,* Comparative and International Education Society 2003 Annual Meeting, New Orleans, March 12th-16th 2003

Surridge, M.E. (2003) *Participation and Change in Education: China and Jamaica,* Consultation for a Change: Involving Community in Making Policy, conference organised by University of Wolverhampton (Centre for International Development and Regional Research Institute) in collaboration with Oxfam and the Social Policy Association, Wolverhampton, 9th May 2003

Walsh, K. (2003) *A Study of the Impact of Literature-based Learning in Rural Jamaican Primary and All Age Schools,* Tenth International Literacy and Education Research Network Conference on Learning, Institute of Education, University of London, 15th-18th July 2003

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Regional Drivers Charles Smith, George Martin, Clive Johnson, Craig Walters, Michael Dwyer, Verley Kelley

JAASP Schools

Region 1 St Andrew and St Thomas

Clifton AA
Westphalia AA
Halls Delight Primary & Junior High
Creighton AA
Woodford AA
Minto AA
Woburn Lawn AA
Penlyne Castle AA

Region 2 Portland

Bybrook Primary
Rock Hall AA
Frutiful Vale AA
Bloomfield AA
Claverty Cottage AA
Tranquility AA
Comfort Castle Primary &Junior High
Moore Town Primary &Junior High

Region 3 St Ann

Alderton AA
Irons Mountain AA
Village AA
Clapham AA
Prickly Pole AA
Camperdown AA
Mount Waddy AA
Waltham AA

Region 4 Hanover

Askenish AA
Hillsbrook AA
Chambers Pen AA
Gurney's Mount AA
Maryland AA
Mount Hannah AA
Brownsville AA
Pondside AA

Region 5 St Elizabeth

Giddy Hall AA
Happy Grove AA
Kilmarnock AA
Clapham AA
Nightingale AA
Beersheba AA
Pisgah AA
Ginger Hill AA

Region 6 Clarendon

Mount Providence AA
Pinders Valley AA
Mount Liberty AA
Morgan's Pass AA
Prospect AA
Red Hills AA
Simons AA
Mitchell's Hill AA