

CHILD RESILIENCY PROGRAMME OF THE VIOLENCE PREVENTION ALLIANCE



AN IMPACT DRIVEN PROGRAMME RESULTING IN CHANGED LIVES



YEAR TWO EVALUATION REPORT
September 2015 - June 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Child Resiliency Programme (CRP) of the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) annually assesses the impact of its intervention to determine the extent of its effectiveness; to improve performance in order to ensure its sustainability.

The CRP targets children (ages 9-12) at risk for violence and abuse through feeder schools in and around its two current partners: Boys Town and YMCA, Kingston Jamaica.

For 2015-2016, a total of 120 children benefitted from the Programme's intervention through its six arms.

The following qualitative and quantitative analysis and findings were derived from a series of interviews, focus groups, pre and post tests and observations:

Referral Criteria of Children in the Child Resiliency Programme

- *Literacy below grade level*
- *Delinquency, excessive fighting, violence and poor internal locus of control*
 - *Family history of incarceration and involvement in gangs*
 - *Inappropriate behaviour*
- *History of sexual, emotional, physical abuse and/or neglect*
 - *Use of drugs and other substances*

The Child Resiliency Programme's Six Arm Theory of Change

- *Life Skills Training Including Mentorship and Spiritual Development*
- *Sporting and Creative (Cultural) Activities to Reinforce Life Skills*
 - *Parent/ Family Counselling and Training*
 - *Academic Support to Increase Literacy*
 - *Teacher Training*
 - *Nutritional Support*

Programme Output for 2015-2016

- 25 facilitators from 2 centres (Boys' Town & YMCA) trained at a workshop held in September 2015.
- Monthly parenting workshops attended by an average of 50 parents: 25 parents at YMCA + 25 parents at Boys Town (20% males & 80% females)
- 120 children (58% males & 42% females) attending afterschool activities three times per week across the Centres; with daily completion of attendance registers: 60 children at Boys Town and 60 children at YMCA.
- 50 teachers from 12 feeder schools trained in February 2016, to manage bullying and behavioural challenges in the classrooms including identifying early warning signs for physical and sexual abuse and risk for violence.

Programme Outcomes for 2015-2016

After one year of Intervention:

Increase in Literacy

- 100% of the children who attended the Programme took part in literacy activities.
- 75% of the children demonstrated an increase in literacy by one grade level (90 children across the centres: 53 males/37 females).
- 90% demonstrated an increased love for learning and reading.
- 90% increase in literacy through the computer at the Boys' Town centre.

Improved Self-esteem & Sense of Belonging

- 85% of the parents, teachers and children confirmed improved self-esteem in the children – they felt better about themselves and felt a sense of belonging.
- 80% displayed increased sense of belonging; strong sense of bonding and connection to children from their school; from other schools in the Programme; with facilitators. Over 75% feel safer and more confident.
- Over 90% of the children felt happier and over 90% could identify someone who cared and to whom they could talk when under undue stress or grief
- Over 90% of the children confirmed that they loved coming to the Programme; that they were more motivated and excited to take part in sporting and creative activities in and outside the Programme; that they loved to learn new things.
- Over 75% of the children felt hopeful about the future and could identify a goal in life; increased independence, use of initiative and decision making.

Improvement in Pro-Social Behaviour

Improvement in Anger Management & Conflict Resolution

- Significant reduction in frequency and intensity of conflicts: hitting, pushing, name-calling, threatening and bullying.
- Frequency and intensity of conflicts.

The Programme has, once again, met its objectives: the children have demonstrated an increase in resiliency, increase in their literacy, protection from and prevention of violence and abuse.

INTRODUCTION

The Child Resiliency Programme (CRP), through its umbrella organisation, Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA), has secured international funding from UK organisation Comic Relief, to achieve the following objective, starting 1 September 2014 for 36 months:

To partner with two non-profit organisations, Boys' Town and Kingston YMCA, to identify and build resiliency in a cohort of 120 pre and young adolescents ages 9-11 years, who are 'at risk' for violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. The CRP partners with initiatives already existing in the community to execute its objective as well as to build the capacity of the community initiatives for long-term impact.

Children were identified and referred by the guidance counsellors and grade five teachers in neighbouring primary schools, according to the following criteria:

Referral Criteria of Children in the Child Resiliency Programme

- *Literacy below grade level*
- *Delinquency, excessive fighting, violence and poor internal locus of control*
 - *Family history of incarceration and involvement in gangs*
 - *Inappropriate behaviour*
- *History of sexual, emotional, physical abuse and/or neglect*
 - *Use of drugs and other substances*

The caregivers of these 120 students signed consent forms for their children to be enrolled in the Programme. This holistic approach of School, Family, Community, Church partnership targeting violence prone communities in Kingston, is expected to reduce the incidence of violence and abuse through the delivery of six arms, over a 1 year period for each cohort:

The Child Resiliency Programme's Six Arm Theory of Change

- *Life Skills Training Including Mentorship and Spiritual Development*
- *Sporting and Creative (Cultural) Activities to Reinforce Life Skills*
 - *Parent/ Family Counselling and Training*
 - *Academic Support to Increase Literacy*
 - *Teacher Training*
 - *Nutritional Support*

The purpose of this annual evaluation is to assess the impact of the Programme’s intervention in the year under review, in order to determine the extent of its effectiveness and improve its performance to ensure its sustainability.



PROGRAMME OPERATION

The intervention programme of the CRP was delivered three times per week, after school at each Centre, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The activities offered were rotated between 6 ‘houses’ at each Centre:

Activities per Centre	
Boys’ Town	Kingston YMCA
Meet: Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays	Meet: Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays
Literacy	Literacy
Circle Time	Circle Time
Art & Craft	Art & Craft
Computer Skills	Swimming
Football	Karate
Boxing	Dancing
Dancing	Drumming
Parent Workshop: last Wednesday of the month	Parent Workshop: last Wednesday of the month
Nutritional support: a meal was served every day	
Annual Sports Day; Mid-term Behavioural Prize-Giving; End-of-term Prize Giving & Awards Ceremonies & Concerts	
Reward & Recognition Programme: 6 different coloured ‘houses’/teams of up to 12 children each. The leading ‘House’ won a prize field trip at the end of each term.	

The Reward and Recognition Programme fosters a sense of bonding, belonging and team spirit, where each ‘house’ gains or loses points/stars based on the behaviour/performance of its members. In addition, individual students who show exemplary behaviour, performance or marked improvement were recognised at the end of each term. The end-of-term concerts included performances by the students in one or more of their areas of activities to showcase what they learned during the term.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from a variety of evaluation tools. Baseline data was collected from 120 referred children through questionnaires and individual interviews which included background information, behavioural measures, home and family support measures, Literacy assessments as well as level of exposure to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Referral forms outlining CRPs criteria were completed by the Guidance Counsellors/ Grade five teachers to indicate why each child was chosen to attend the Programme. Pre and post Grade 4 Literacy tests were also completed by the referred children to determine grade-level of increase over the reporting period. In addition, baseline questionnaires were completed by parents at Parent Workshops by November 2015, which included rating their children on pro-social behaviours (politeness, honesty, anger management, obedience, use of appropriate language, helpfulness, proper hygiene, participation); to assess level of communication with their children; involvement in their children’s lives; knowledge of physical abuse prevention; as well as to determine resilient attributes and protection from violence and abuse.

Programme Centres by Gender				
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Gender	Male	38	32	70
	Female	22	28	50
Total		60	60	120

During the month of June 2016, focus group discussions were held with a sample of 24 parents (Boys Town: 12 & YMCA: 12); 44 children (Boys Town: 20; YMCA: 24); the facilitators at each centre; as well as the grade 5 teachers and guidance counsellors in 9 feeder schools. Interviews were conducted with the Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators of both centres; as well as the Executive Director of the Programme.

In addition, weekly site visits were conducted to monitor attendance and the effective delivery of the programme. The data was quantitatively and qualitatively analysed to provide the below information.

Programme Centres and their Feeder Schools	
Boys Town	Kingston YMCA
Boy's Town All Age	Half-Way-Tree Primary
Denham Town Primary	Mona Heights Primary
St. Alban's Primary	Tarrant Primary
St. Andrew Primary	St. Jude's Primary
Jones Town Primary	St. Patrick's Primary
St. Anne's Primary	
Trench Town Primary	



The findings were shared at staff/facilitator meetings held each term; and used to influence the planned strategies and activities for year three. The Programme findings were also shared at the VPA committee meeting which included approximately fifteen partner organisations involved in violence prevention activities across non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government agencies, churches and communities. The VPA committee members conducted a site visit to the Programme on 12 May 2016. The evaluation findings have also been posted on the Child Resiliency Programme's website; and were shared at the Programme leaving ceremonies at the Boys Town and YMCA which was attended by parents,

partner sites -

teachers, key community personnel and the children themselves. Two media interviews were conducted during the year under review. The Programme was also shared at the Ministry of Education's Behaviour Change Committee, and at the Boards of the Ministry of National Security and Restorative Justice.

The baseline data collected was input and stored in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which was able to supply data as needed.

FINDINGS

The **Programme Outputs** for the year under review are:

- 25 facilitators from 2 centres (Boys' Town & YMCA) trained at a workshop held in September 2015.
- Monthly parenting workshops attended by an average of 50 parents: 25 parents at YMCA + 25 parents at Boys Town (20% males & 80% females)
- 120 children (58% males & 42% females) attending afterschool activities three times per week across the Centres; with daily completion of attendance registers: 60 children at Boys Town and 60 children at YMCA.
- 50 teachers from 12 feeder schools trained in February 2016, to manage bullying and behavioural challenges in the classrooms including identifying early warning signs for physical and sexual abuse and risk for violence.

Attendance

Attendance registers were completed daily at each Centre and a tally of the children present and absent was noted. Follow up phone calls were made for children who were notably absent for an extended period. This helped to keep track of the children.

Inconsistent attendance and punctuality however, affected the full impact of the sessions. Several reasons contributed to this: transportation issues at the YMCA; late dismissal of the children by their feeder schools; participation in school field trips, events or extra-curricular activities; family commitments; and outbreak of gang violence.



The main challenge of transportation from feeder schools to the YMCA centre was addressed in the first year: additional funding was sought for buses to transport the children to and from the centre. Whereas this saw an improvement in consistency of attendance, occasions when the bus or the driver was indisposed affected the children's attendance and punctuality and by extension, the overall effectiveness of the intervention.

Attendance at the Boy's Town centre was severely affected in the third term after the country's general elections when an uprising of gang violence forced children to stay indoors (in some cases from school). The attendance dropped to about 50% for a 3 week period in May 2016. Tremendous efforts were made to keep the children safe and coming to the Programme after school.

On average 60 children attended each centre regularly but it was not always consistent. A few teachers still held back the children from attending because they were 'rude and disruptive in the classroom'. Their perception was that the Programme was 'fun' and not appropriate as it rewarded 'bad behaviour'. This practice decreased since the teacher training workshop but still continued to be a challenge. Another challenge was the "extra lessons" held after school.

In addition, children's attendance was also affected when one driver refused to take certain children on the bus because they were 'out of order'. This was an unexpected outcome: drivers need to be sensitised to the objectives of the Programme.



The replacement of children especially at the YMCA affected the effective delivery of the Programme. One school for example, replaced many of their children in the second term which saw the injection of old habits and some regression of the children who were enrolled at the beginning of the school year.

Punctuality of the facilitators/volunteers improved significantly as the teams bonded and their commitment to the Programme increased.

Getting parents to come out to parent training seminars also proved to be very challenging. The system of texting parents at Boys Town to disseminate information and notices did not work as well as it did at the YMCA, because getting a consistent set of phone numbers in that community proved very difficult. To improve

attendance, the parent training seminars were referred to as 'Parent Dinners' and prizes (phone cards) and surprises were distributed to the parents who attended. This improved the attendance dramatically.



THE SIX ARMS OF DELIVERY

OUTCOMES & INDICATORS

Life Skills Training via Circle Time, Sports & Creative/Cultural Activities

Life Skills Training is employed to develop critical thinking, build self-esteem, as well as moral, physical, social, cognitive, spiritual and emotional competencies. **Exposure to and participation in the life skills activities (Sports, Circle Time and Creative Activities) provide avenues for physical, emotional and creative outlets and act as tools to develop anger management, conflict resolution, self-discipline, socially acceptable behaviour and teamwork skills; the outcome of which are resilient attributes** such as independence, initiative, humour, positive relationships, insight, creativity, morality, spirituality,



insight into one's own strengths and weaknesses and increased self-esteem. **Improved resilient attributes reduces the vulnerability to become involved in drug use, gang membership and other high risk behaviours.**

The value of Sport to reinforce Life Skills lies in its inherent attributes: universal popularity and powerful global communication that transcend socio-economic and political boundaries to effectively “bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status” *Kofi Anan, United Nations*. A universal language, Sports empower, motivate and inspire by drawing on, developing and showcasing individual and collective strengths.

The benefits of Sport in reinforcing Life Skills are endless. They include: strengthening child development and education; enhancing physical and psychosocial health and development; enabling independence and participation; providing opportunities for leadership and achievement; enhancing mental health; building positive values; helping children recover from trauma; promoting gender equity; fostering self-esteem and empowerment; and facilitating social inclusion/integration. This universal appeal empowers those affected and fosters strong community cohesion.

Outcome

Greater protection from violence, exploitation and abuse by identifying children at risk for violence and abuse and referring them to intervention for life skills training.

Indicator (a): # of programme children caught in a fight or sent out of the classroom for poor behavior during school or in the Child Resiliency Program.



The feeder schools referred 22% of their students for ‘fighting/anger/ aggression’ (Fig.5). In addition, the baseline data shows 28% of the total number of students across the centres admitting to being reprimanded by their teachers for fighting (Fig.6). Most of them say they did it in ‘self-defense’ using their fists to thump and legs to kick their antagonizers. **It was clear that aggression was their first response to solving issues.**

Fig. 5 Programme Centres by Number of Children Referred for Fighting/Aggression				
		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Children referred for Fighting/Anger/Aggression	Yes	12	25	37
	No	15	11	26
		33	24	57
Total		60	60	120

Fig 6. Programme Centres by Number of Children Reprimanded for Fighting at School				
		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Number of children reprimanded for fighting at school	Yes	0	3	3
	No	21	13	34
		39	44	83
Total		63	60	120

Most of the students live in well-known, violence-prone communities in Kingston. **Some have even lost a parent or loved one to violence or have a parent incarcerated because of violence. 9.1% of the children across the centres reported that they do not feel safe at home because of violence in their area (Fig. 7). This includes 13% of the children at the Boys' Town Centre. In addition, 15% of the children across the centres admitted to being afraid at school because of gun shots, theft and bullying (Fig.8).**



Fig. 7 Programme Centres by Number of Children Feeling Safe at Home				
		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Children feeling safe at home		0	3	3
	Yes	51	52	103
	No: when left at home alone	1	2	3
	No: violence in the area	8	3	11
Total		60	60	120

The children are products of their aggressive environment. This indicated the need for anger management and conflict resolution skills for both parent/ caregiver and child.

“My daughter improve with the fighting, she still do it but she improve a lot... say about 70% out of 100%”

Fig 8. Programme Centres by Number of Children Feeling Safe at School

		Programme Centre		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Children feeling safe at school	Yes	0	3	3
	No	50	48	98
	No: bullying	0	1	1
	No: violence in the area	4	5	9
		6	3	9
Total		60	60	120

By the end of the year, the Programme saw 75% of children fighting less aggressively with a reduction in the frequency and intensity of conflicts. In addition, further measures of aggression including hitting, pushing, name-calling, threatening and bullying were significantly reduced.

For the majority of students, the number of reported incidents of forced removal from class as a result of disruptive behaviour decreased from the beginning of their involvement in the Programme from an average of once per day in September 2015 to twice monthly in June 2016.

“Mi still fight but not all the time. My mother says when dem a fight me, mi mus walk away and tell a teacher. Anytime him following me, mi walk fast and don’t pay him nuh mind and if mi see Miss, mi tell her and she tell him to leave me alone.”



Although most learned to call on an adult when there was the threat of a fight, there is still room for improvement as they still on occasion, took matters in their own hands and reacted aggressively without thinking. **Even their play was aggressive.** Although there was a general improvement in conflict resolution, some children could benefit from further intervention outside of the Programme.

“The Programme helped because my son was short tempered before him start the Programme but I’ve not seen that in him since him start the Programme. Him was ignorant and stuff like that...quick to fight. Mi nuh really see that inna him since him start attending the Programme. Since the Programme, him calm.”

“At first, the children from the different schools were unfriendly, even aggressive to each other but as the year progressed, there was less turf issues. The Programme is intended to diffuse these turf issues by mixing the schools into houses. There is definitely a sense of inter and intra school friendships formed”



Indicator (b): # of children who can identify someone who cares and to talk to for support

The baseline data sought to capture the support system available to the students in light of their harsh environment. 78% of the children said they felt comfortable talking to their parents or guardians when they felt very sad, scared or felt like crying (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9 Programme Centres by Number of Children Having Someone to Talk to for Support				
		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Number of children identifying someone to talk to for support.	Yes-parent/guardian	0	3	3
	No	45	48	93
	Yes- sibling/cousin/friend	9	5	14
		6	4	13
Total		60	60	120

Their reality however, is that **most of the parents available to listen to their children are the mothers or guardians as their biological fathers are often absent for one reason or another (including death, migration, incarceration or separation) and therefore not actively involved in the day-to-day parenting of their children.** Baseline data shows only 23% of children living with both parents; and 63% living with their mother as a single parent (Fig. 10).

“Miss I like the Programme. Everything is nice. They teach us good stuff. yuh can talk to dem and dem tek care of you, dem nuh mek harm and danger come to yuh.

Fig. 10 Programme Centre by Main Caregiver of Children				
		Programme Centre		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Main caregiver of children	Mother	40	36	76
	Father	4	5	9
	Both Parents	10	17	27
	Grand Parent or Parents	5	1	6
	Aunt and/or Uncle/ other relative	1	1	2
Total		60	60	120

The complexity of the family structure can either strengthen or weaken the effectiveness of the support system in the homes. 58% of the children said they had a visiting relationship with their absent biological parent, most of whom were their biological fathers (Fig. 11). In addition, quite a few of the children, when asked about their fathers, refer to ‘step fathers’ who may or may not be married to their mothers or even live in the same house with them and their mothers.

Fig. 11 Programme Centre by Level of Contact With Absent Parent

		Programme Centre		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Level of contact with absent parent	Sees/ Talks to Frequently	26	18	44
	Sees/ Talks to Sometimes	12	13	25
	No Contact	4	3	7
	Not Applicable	18	23	41
Total		60	60	120



In summary, the support system for the children is strongly affected by the compromised family structure, levels of dysfunction, high levels of aggression and poor anger management and conflict resolution skills on the part of both the parent/caregiver and child.

“I like everything about the Programme because all our Aunties and Uncles care for one another and care for us children. The Programme is extremely fine. It’s not a problem. We are like a little family.”

At the end of the one year intervention, **Over 90% could identify someone who cared and to whom they could talk when under undue stress or grief: their caregivers, teachers or guidance counsellors, and facilitators at the Child Resiliency Programme.**

“She had temper because She was molested. When she go a de Programme, dem tings just come off her mind. De Programme keep her from coming home and fretting on de drama at home. She tell mi seh she know how to play football now. She’s not a dancer and she learn fi dance at the Programme and when mi come over there an’ see her do the moves, mi laugh till mi cry. De Programme help her 100%.”

Indicator (c): Children feel safe and supported to express their grief

According to the baseline data, 77% of the students admitted to feeling very sad for several reasons ranging from being frequently picked on by their classmates and being left at home alone, to missing their absent parent especially the ones who have died (Fig.12). This includes 13% feeling sad because their parents shout at or curse them.

Fig 12 Programme Centres by Number of Children Feeling Sad/Depressed				
		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Children feeling sad/ depressed		0	3	3
	Feels sad sometimes	27	29	56
	Feels sad- Parent/Guardian shouts at or curses them	11	4	15
	Feels Sad-left at home alone	3	1	4
	Feels Sad: loss of loved one (death/separation)	8	6	14
	No	11	17	28
Total		60	60	120

Most children admitted to being able to talk to the ‘Aunties’ and ‘Uncles’ in the Programme as well as their guidance counsellors and parents when they were sad, distressed or grieving. They felt better knowing that someone cared. Some did however confess that their parents were not always around because they were working, incarcerated or dead.

“Him enjoy the Programme. His father died of cancer in October last year. He used to do well. He come second place in grade 3. Him all get medal. But from the father died, him fall off. Him and him father was very close. But from the father died, him come and tell me seh him miss him father. He used to be aggressive. Me 100% comfortable with the Programme. Mi nuh have no problem with it. Him tell me everything him do at the Programmed from start to finish, if him had a problem him would a talk. Anytime me tell him not to go to the Programme ah pure tears.”



Indicator (d): Children demonstrating an increase in resilient attributes and pro social behaviours: Can identify a goal in life, displaying an increase in self- esteem, sense of belonging and better relationship with peers, teachers and parents.

This cohort of children in Year 2 displayed similar inappropriate behaviours to those in Year 1: being disorderly, speaking out of turn, easily aggravated and affected by their peers and not showing respect for each other and their supervisors. Of the referral forms submitted by feeder schools, 19% of the students were referred for ‘*displaying inappropriate behaviour*’ (Fig. 13). There is a clear need for guidance in, and positive reinforcement of, life skills training including self-discipline, teamwork and other social courtesies.

Fig. 13. Programme Centres by Number of Children Referred for Displaying Inappropriate Behaviour

		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Children referred for displaying inappropriate behaviour	Yes	12	25	37
	No	9	7	16
	Total	39	28	67
Total		60	60	120

Circle Time for Life Skills Training

Some children expressed love for **circle time where they were given an opportunity to discuss their issues and topics which followed weekly themes such as healthy sexuality, decision making, conflict resolution, anger management, peer friendships, and gender differences.** Methods used in circle time included discussion, games, videos, demonstrations as discussion teasers. Spin the bottle, Stories, practical activities, group work, music, pictures and visual aids, presentations and self-expression through art. These activities helped the children build pro-social behaviours: politeness, honesty and courtesy, saying ‘please’, ‘thank you’ ‘I’m sorry’. **Their self-discipline: taking turns and displaying appropriate behaviour, also improved. This resulted in improved relationships with classmates, teachers and parents; as well as teamwork and anger management skills.** One facilitator commented that there was evidence that the children were not just grasping the concepts theoretically, but they tried to put it into practice: “Even the topic on bullying, some children were making the effort to not bully others. To warn their classmates”

“Circle time is to help you release and let go and feel comfortable. Dem teach you bout puberty and sex control.”



Spiritual Development took place mainly at devotions the first 15 minutes of each afternoon. A thematic approach was used which reinforced a life skills topic. Favourite choruses oftentimes suggested by the children were sung, bible passages were read and a devotional was used to relay a story, theme and lesson. Faith in God was seen as one of their survival tools when they felt angry or sad. **This year, the children were eager to volunteer in leading devotions – another indication of their comfort level, sense of belonging and improved self-esteem.**

All the children felt hopeful about the future and had a goal in life. They wanted to be nurses, teachers, lawyers, pilots, and “police office to keep danger from their community, doctors to help sick people.”

“I want to be a pilot to travel people from one distance to other; and if I don’t succeed to be a pilot, I want to be a soldier to take care of my country.”

Sports to Reinforce Life Skills (football, boxing, karate, swimming)

Sports in this context is recognized as ‘all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport and indigenous sports or games’ *United Nations 2008*. Because sports has the capacity to reach vast numbers of people, it is an effective platform for public education & social mobilization. It is seen as ‘the best school for life’ and is intentionally implemented in the Programme to act as a common ground for open and safe interaction for the children; to encourage trust through group achievement and reliance on one another as teammates aiming for the same goal.

For this reporting period, **sports was used as a powerful tool for engaging at risk children in activities that promoted positive development as a diversionary approach to tackling crime, to inspire behaviour change and teach important life skills for example anger management, team building, building self-esteem, decision making and self-discipline. It promoted positive values including developing relationships and trust, taking on responsibility and learning how to resolve conflicts.**



The role of the sports coach in engendering a positive ‘socio-moral’ environment was evident.

The baseline data shows that 23% of the referred children reported being involved in sporting activities at least three times per week; and 15% were involved in club activities such as boys' scout, dancing etc. prior to coming to the Programme (Fig. 1).

The appeal of sport helped to attract the children at risk to the Programme and acted as a 'hook' for engagement. They enjoyed and identified with the sporting components and it generated a sense of excitement and belonging for them, similar to feelings experienced as part of a gang.



Because **sports evoke tremendous passion**, it captured the imagination of the children which often proves much more difficult in the classroom. Because of this passion and love, instead of giving up, the children welcomed all the sporting activities. **Sports therefore became a strong force in behaviour modification, emotional growth, and pro-social practices.** It became an avenue for the Programme children to excel/shine where otherwise they would have been labelled as "no good" or incompetent as some of them have quite good sporting ability.

"When mi feel stress, mi learn to tek off the stress in boxing."

Over 75% of the children demonstrated improvement in the Life Skills learned for example, Karate stressed self-discipline, inner strength and coordination, as well as to refrain from violent behaviour; while football built tenacity, perseverance, teamwork and conflict resolution - all ingredients of a resilient character. Swimming and Boxing were major outlets for emotional release and psychological therapy.



“The primary thing about karate is self-discipline, not fighting.”

Sessions were reported by the coaches to have encouraged greater self-control, discipline and respect among the participants as well as improved communication skills which in turn translated into better behaviour in the classroom.



“When yuh a play football and dem tackle and kick you down and you and dem a war, sir mek yuh shake hands and then we go back on the field and start working as a team again.”



Sports day, one of the big events for the year, saw great excitement and full participation from all the children cheering their teams while competing for the sports house winner. Introvert personalities were volunteering to enter in some races and the day stimulated the competitive spirit in the children. Leadership, discipline and teamwork were all on display.

“Jane was completely withdrawn and on sports day I saw her participating and holding hands with a friend.”

“Sports had the most positive impact on behaviour as it was used within the wider developmental programme of education and support, mentoring, life skills training and parent training/family counselling.” Dr. Kim Scott, Executive Director



Creative (Cultural) Expression to Reinforce Life Skills (art & craft, dance, drumming)

The main objective of Creative Expression is to reinforce what is taught in Life Skills training via Sports and Circle Time including helping the children gain a positive, meaningful perspective of themselves; team work; leadership skills, relationship management, conflict resolution, anger management among other socially healthy behaviours.

There was an **overall increase in participation in creative arts to 90%** for the period under review. All interviewees – teachers, team members and children – confirmed a **70% increase in after school activities in, and outside of school.** They made fun and exciting things in Art & Craft: Mothers' and Fathers' Day cards; notebooks about themselves; totes; etc. all of which were on display at the Award ceremonies.



With drumming they learn a new skill plus they learn to listen, follow instruction, and enjoy themselves. That is success. Dancing is a part of them. They talk, feel and dance music. It stimulates teamwork. So, that's a success. They love it. They come from an environment where they're always on the street, always listening to music."

The children performed in concerts at the Programme and at their schools throughout the year and took part in several non-academic activities at their schools (eg. cheerleading, boys' scout). This boosted their image and self-confidence. Parents, teachers and children confessed to improved self-esteem in the children. Their well-executed performances at Christmas and the closing ceremonies bore witness to the fact that they were indeed 'at promise' despite their circumstances. **For the second time in two years, the St. Patrick Primary students volunteered to perform at the Programme Leaving Ceremony at the YMCA. This year, they performed a sign language dance learned at their school. This showed that they had grown in their self-esteem and it was a positive re-enforcement to their self-confidence.**

"The value system portrayed at the Programme with the awarding of stars, the motivation, the encouragement, the devotion, through the stories, fosters self-reflection among the students to curb their attitudes."

By the Programme Leaving Ceremony in June 2016, there was noticeable improvement in the children's social skills, an increase in politeness, respect for others, less fighting, less cursing. They displayed an increased sense of belonging and a strong sense of bonding and connection to children from their school as well as from other schools in the Programme; as well as with facilitators in the Programme. This safe supportive environment reduced their risk for entering into a life of gangs and violence.



“Yeah, she have a lot more confidence more than first time. Before she get in the Programme, she used to doubt herself and she more outspoken now. She not that reserve again like first time. I hug her back and sometimes we play and I encourage her to continue what she is doing. ”

Since the start of the Programme, she more loving to me. She come and hug me sometimes and say ‘yuh know mi love you’. She neva used to do that before.”

She not that rebellious again.

In addition, the ‘aunties’ and ‘uncles’ at the Programme provided strong mentorship to and positive role models for the children which was an alternative positive attachment for the children in the absences of a positive parent or caregiver.

“Something was attracting them. They wanted to be there. They obviously felt loved. The extra love and attention definitely made an impact on them. Maybe too, it was because it wasn’t school and they weren’t being graded. It was fun.”

All children who were identified to be at risk and referred to the centres have been offered greater protection from violence, exploitation and abuse. They have participated in regular life skills training activities and have demonstrated an increase in all pro social behavioural measures of honesty, politeness, courtesy, **75% of children have demonstrated a decrease in the number of fights and fewer reports have been made to the principal or Guidance Counsellor for fighting in the classroom. Greater than 75% can identify someone to talk to for support.** By the third term **70% of the children started operating as a team, developed inter and intra school friendships; independence and use of initiative. 75% demonstrated improvement in social skills. Some behaviour change was short-lived. There is always room for improvement.**

“Every morning before him go a school, mi hug him. Sometimes him say later mummy and blow mi kiss. The Progamme mek him change, he wasn’t a loving little boy yuh nuh. Sometimes him sit down and just nah talk or play wid nobody. Since the Programme, him will hug yuh up. Sometimes him call me an ask ‘mummy yuh alright?’ The Programme change him a lot man. Him going to miss the Programme.”





“From my son has been in the Programme he has become more outspoken. He was a very shy person. He’s forming more friendships because he’s speaking up more, he’s playing more. Right now he’s enrolled in summer camp and I could not have gotten him to go to summer camp. He’s interested in other people. He’s not afraid anymore to leave home and spend time in a new environment.”

“They were so happy to come to the Programme as if they had a sense of belonging there; and a sense of connectedness to something that is doing something for them; a sense that somebody cares; somebody wants to help us. Some would even walk when the bus left them. People only walked to things that is benefitting them. ”

“Theoretically, the children grasped/ understood the concepts taught e.g. the topic of handling rejection: we talked about turning it into lemonade. Trying to put a positive spin on a negative situation.. They understood that and one child, when someone said something insulting to him in another class, I could see him calming himself and saying to himself: ‘Turn it into lemonade, don’t let it get to you’ “



“The creative activities and sporting components of the Programme are our major strengths. They are the tools for behaviour change that are working. I’m very happy with the creative arts. That’s what’s engaging the kids, that’s what’s keeping them out of trouble and keeping them out of risk. The sheer fun, the sense of belonging, the comraderie, self-control, the teamwork – all of the things that the Programme is trying to instil in the children.”

Dr. Kim Scott, Executive Director



Parent / Family Counselling and Training

A key objective of this arm is to promote positive parent/caregiver-child interactions, including the use of non-violent discipline by **building resiliency, knowledge, confidence in the parents/caregivers as well as to provide a support base so that they in turn, will be able to encourage positive behavioural outcomes in their children.** It is also to equip parents to model and better communicate with their children, positive violence prevention, anger management, conflict resolution, sexual & reproductive health and drug abuse prevention practices.

Indicator (e): # of parents trained and better able to communicate with their child

Parental neglect or lack of support was a major contributing factor to the children’s behavioural challenges. This was evidenced in the difficulty in getting parents/caregivers to attend monthly parent meetings and to support their children’s activities. The feeder schools themselves had poor attendance at PTAs. It is hoped that in the future, active home visits will stimulate increased attendance.

One facilitator commented on the relationship he/she observed between some parents and their children: “I had the opportunity to travel on two buses and was able to observe the children in and outside the Programme. The language, the discussion and the behaviour in the presence of their parents indicated that they had little regard for the adults. When I observed the interaction between the child and the parent, it was obvious that the parent didn’t have much control over the child. When you hear the discussions, you understand their value system and where they are coming from. It was obvious the skills they are learning cannot be successfully reinforced in the home without some measure of intervention.”



Parents who attended monthly Parenting Workshops were asked to complete questionnaires indicating their assessment of their children as well as themselves. In assessing their communication with their children, 51%

of those in attendance, rated themselves as excellent; 9% as very good and 7% as good. In summary, most parents in attendance felt their communication with their children was satisfactory (Fig. 14).

Fig. 14 Programme Centres by Parents' Assessment of Their Communication With Their Children

		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Parents rate their communication with their children		14	0	14
	Fair	0	1	1
	Good	1	2	3
	Very Good	2	2	4
	Excellent	7	16	23
	Absent	36	39	75
Total		60	60	120

From the children's perspective, 93% said they felt loved and cared for by their mothers, while 73% felt cared for by their fathers (Figs. 15 and 16). 37% of the children said their absent parent called them regularly and/or they (the students) spent part of their holidays with their absent parent (Fig. 17). Of note is some of the students' interpretation of 'care'. To them it means supplying money or material things. It does not necessarily mean love and emotional support.

“Sometimes she would come inna mi room and sit beside me and ask me questions which she neva normally do. Sometimes mi help her with the homework. I’m not all that bright but mi help her with what mi can.”



Fig. 15 Programme Centres by Number of Children Who Feel Cared For by Their Mothers

		Programme Centre		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Children who feel cared for by their mothers	Yes	0	3	3
	No	56	56	112
	No Response	1	0	1
	Not Applicable	0	1	1
		3	0	3
Total		60	60	120

Fig. 16 Programme Centres by Number of Children Who Feel Cared For by Their Fathers

		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Children who feel cared for by their fathers	Yes	0	3	3
	No	41	46	87
	No Response	5	1	6
	Not Applicable	1	2	3
	Don't know	7	5	12
Total		63	60	120

By the end of the reporting period, 80% of children and parents confessed to improvement in their communication with each other.

“The parent workshop was good. I made friends at the workshop and me and for that parent, workshop don’t miss us none at all. Mi cyan find the exact words fi describe the Programme. Mi love it. Mi really love it. Mi love how dem care fi de children dem. Especially by talking with dem and feeling dem out. ‘Cause sometimes some children have somethings bundle up inside of dem and by talking with them, it just come out.”

Indicator (f): # of parents trained and reporting an increased belief in the use of appropriate discipline (not corporal punishment)

The baseline data shows 37% of parents who attended the parent workshops assessed their ability to discipline their children as excellent; whereas 17% assessed themselves as very good; 13% good. Overall, 100% of attending parents felt their ability to discipline their children was satisfactory (Fig. 17).

Fig. 17 Programme Centres by Parents’ Assessment of Their Ability to Discipline Their Children				
		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Parents rate their ability to discipline their children		14	0	14
	Good	4	3	7
	Very Good	3	5	8
	Excellent	3	14	17
	Absent	36	38	74
Total		60	60	120

The report by parents of improved parental communication and using appropriate discipline was significant for those who attended but unfortunately there was still inconsistent parental attendance at monthly parent training workshops and this affected the transfer of information. However, those parents who attended gained valuable tips on communicating effectively with their children; the difference between appropriate discipline and corporal punishment; conflict resolution, gang prevention and displaying of affection. The parent attendance remained at approximately 17-20 parents at each centre. Great efforts to reach the parents

continue to be made including calls, texts, and incentives (meals and phone cards) although the main reasons for these children's referral continues to make these parents a difficult target.

All parents who attended expressed improvement in their own attitude as well as towards their children; they also reported better control with their own anger to be loving to their children, to hug them a lot, to listen to their children, never give up, give a little extra love and time, and in realising that not every child learns at the same pace - patience and tolerance. Parents have learnt the importance of more involvement in the child's life (general supervision, supervising homework and attending PTAs). According to one facilitator, "when the parents come, they listen, they ask questions, they participate, it's very interactive and they leave with a sense of belonging and awareness."

"I neva miss parent workshop. Having the group of us at parent workshop and talking help tek away the stress. Mi nuh badda tek bus, mi tek taxi an' reach fast fi get mi phone card. It mean a lot. I learn not to be angry at the children dem. Nuh fi tell dem seh dem stay like dem wutlis puppa. Mi learn fi cut out all a that. Dem ignorancy state just out now. Mi used to lik her hard and turn round and sorry fi her. But mi stop do dem sumting there. Mi just find myself calm. Mi just open up mi eye pan dem now. It teach me a lot. De Guidance Counsellor seh sometimes when we knock dem, dem end up inna hospital and a you same one inna de problem. De Programme doing 100% already. I like when dem get stars, miself go check star a evening time when mi go."

"She got into a little conflict with a little boy and she tell me about it and mi tell her seh is not everything you have to build an argument about. Sometimes yuh can walk away. Mi get fi know the little boy and mi talk to him and the two of them become friends now."

"Coming to the parent meetings has taught me how to handle my son, to be patient, how to listen rather than bully him; and to guide him."

"The parent workshop teach me how to deal with my daughter. How to show her more love and when she try my patience, I count from 1 to 10. First time I would just lick her or run her or sometimes I used to curse bad-word to her but I stop from I start the Programme and realize how to deal with her. So mi cut out all a those things and try find out what's the matter and mi nuh badda rough her, mi try to talk to her more. It teach me a lot. How to manage my anger."

Parents and children also benefited tremendously from family counselling and home visits. At Boys Town, no home visits were done given the flair up of violence in the area: sporadic gunshots would fire at any given time. Phone calls and texts were employed instead. **Overall, 10% of the cohort of children underwent family**

counselling at both centres. There was success in up to nine cases of children who were counselled including family counselling over the year, some of them were referred for further intervention.

One challenge in this area is that the number of children needing family counselling and home visits is currently more than originally anticipated and is too much for the current one person per site assigned to this task. There is a greater need for the greater in-depth family counselling maybe from 5-6 cases to up to 20 cases from each centre.

More females than men attended the parent support meetings as expected as the fathers were either emotionally or physically absent due to incarceration, death or migration. The females attending included approximately half grandmothers and other caregivers

The parents admitted seeing a marked improvement in their children’s self-esteem, improved love for learning and reading; less fighting and keeping ‘bad’ company; improved spiritual development; more interest in art, and helping more at home. The testimonials speak for themselves:

He open up more, he relate to other people more, It’s a good Programme and I will encourage any parent to let their children go to it. The Programme help my child’s self-esteem. It help you the parent how to deal with your child. I would recommend other parent to not just send their children, but they go and see what is taking place there because some parents send out the children and don’t know what’s going on there.”

“He would tell me about the Programme in the evenings and remind me about the parent meetings. He’s taking part in more activities at school. He’s answering questions in class, coming out of his shell.”

Academic Support to Increase Literacy

Outcome

Improved access to good quality, non-formal education and training by providing literacy training after school 3 days/week.

Children who live in a violent and abusive environment tend to have poor concentration which can result in low academic performance. **Those who are unable to read effectively have shown to be more likely to engage in high risk behaviours** including increased fighting, aggressiveness, getting involved in gangs and displaying inappropriate behaviour. **The aim of this arm therefore, is to help the Programme children become functionally literate through small group teaching.**

Indicator (a): # of children taking part in reading/literacy activities after school

The children’s literacy levels were assessed at the beginning and end of the school year to determine their grade levels; to target areas of weaknesses; and to document improvements.

The baseline data shows 18% of the 120 children enrolled in the Programme, already taking part in literacy/extra lessons activities after school (Fig. 1). This combined with the fact that 51% of students from the feeder schools were referred for ‘requires additional reading support’ (Fig. 2), spoke volumes to the need for literacy training among the cohort.

Fig. 1 Programme Centres by Number of Children Involved in After-school Activities

		Programme Centres		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Number of children involved in after -school programmes		0	3	3
	Yes-Sport	12	16	28
	Yes-Club	11	7	18
	Yes-Academic/Extra lessons	11	10	21
	No	26	24	50
Total		60	60	120

Fig. 2 Programme Centres by Number of Children Referred as Requiring Additional Reading Support

		Programme Centre		Total
		Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Number of students referred as requiring additional reading support		11	25	39
	Yes	36	27	63
	No	13	8	21
Total		60	60	120

For the year under review, 100% of the children who attended the Programme took part in literacy activities.

Indicator (b): # of children showing an increase in literacy by one grade level

The baseline data captured the literacy levels of the students at entry into the Programme using graded sentences and a Pre-test. At Boys Town, 60 children were individually assessed for their reading using graded sentences. 1% of the children were found to be reading at Grade 2 level; 18% each at Grades 3 and 4; and 53% at Grade 5 (Fig. 3).

At the YMCA, 60 children were assessed for their reading using graded sentences. 5% read at Grade 1 level; 7% at Grade 2; 19% at Grade 3; 10.2% at Grade 4; and 59% at Grade 5 (Fig. 3).

In summary, 29% of the students assessed entered the Programme reading below grade 4 level at Boys Town and 30% of students assessed entered reading below grade 4 level at the YMCA (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Programme Centres by Entry Literacy Levels

	Programme Centres		Total
	Boys' Town Centre	Kingston YMCA Centre	
Child's Entry Literacy level	0	1	1
Grade 1 Level	0	3	3
Grade 2 Level	6	4	10
Grade 3 Level	11	11	22
Grade 4 Level	11	6	17
Grade 5 Level	32	35	67
Total	60	60	120

For the year under review, 75% of the children demonstrated an increase in literacy by one grade level (90 children across the centres: 53 males/37 females). A sample is shown in Fig. 4:

“The Boys Town students have improved in their literacy. Most of the children’s literacy increased by one grade level. This set of children has improved greatly as shown in their close relationship with the facilitators and with each other.”



Fig. 4 Sample Showing Children’s Increase in Literacy

	Literacy Pre-Test	Literacy Post Test
A. W.	A:80-100%	A:80-100%
A. D.	A:80-100%	A:80-100%
A. B.	C:50-64%	A:80-100%
A. J.	A:80-100%	A:80-100%
A. D.	A:80-100%	A:80-100%
A. S.	A:80-100%	A:80-100%
A. M.	C:50-64%	B: 65-79%
B. M.	A:80-100%	C:50-64%
C. W.	A:80-100%	A:80-100%
C. D.	A:80-100%	A:80-100%
D. H.	B: 65-79%	A:80-100%
J. S.	D:36-49%	B: 65-79%
K. J.	A:80-100%	A:80-100%
K. C.	C:50-64%	B: 65-79%

The children at both Boys Town and the YMCA, who were reading well below their grade level (at grades 1-2 level) and could not function in the group setting; or needed to focus more, were pulled and placed with teachers who worked with them at their pace: sound blends, listening and reading skills and spelling. Meeting the needs of these children continued to pose a challenge and as a result, a request was made to a special needs teachers’ college (MICO) to assign specially trained practicum students to the task. This is expected to take full effect in year three. Some children with obvious learning disabilities were referred elsewhere even from the school level.



Indicator (c): Children demonstrating an increased love for learning and reading

Children, teachers and parents reported a 90% increase in love for learning and reading among the children which has, for the most part, positively affected the children's attitude and grades at school.

Assignments were given from workbooks which were marked in class to give the students immediate feedback on their performance and progress. The children for the most part were attentive but easily distracted and distracting. A lot of time was spent bringing order to the classes. **Excessive behaviours were referred to the Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator of the Centres who counselled the children and spoke with their caregivers where necessary.**

"I see a lot of improvement in her. 'cause she reading more better now and she learn to spell words more clearer now."

Because most of the children were tactile learners, and visually and creatively inclined, visual cues, tools and activities were used including: 'Your issues live' where children were given the opportunity to share their experiences based on a comprehension or other topic; bingo word games, and quiz' were used with a focus on basic language skills: types of sentences, parts of speech, similes, metaphors; spelling and vocabulary including use of the dictionary; comprehension skills; phonetic reading; and self-expression through letter and story writing. **Five children at each centre wrote and read their testimonials at the Programme Leaving Ceremonies at the end of the school year in June 2016.**

it is important that these concepts be re-enforced long after the children leave the Programme, until it becomes second nature to them. This is where the role of the parent/caregiver becomes crucial in providing continuity in the homes. Efforts to foster this remain on-going.

"She learn how to use the computer and she making friends now. She mek a big turn around. She not angry again."

Another interactive tool used to teach Literacy was the computer at Boys' Town which showed a 90% increase in computer literacy. The classes not only gave the children a basic to intermediary grasp of computer literacy, interactive learning/teaching

websites and computer games were used to help children in reading, comprehension, and how to research information on the internet. The latter came in handy for class projects. The computer lab at the YMCA is expected to be up and running and available to the referrals by year three.

5. Nutritional Support

Nutrition and resilience are co-dependent and mutually re-enforcing *FAO*. Children cannot focus and be productive if they are hungry or mal nourished. One objective of the Programme is to provide weekly nutritional meals; to offer parents and children practical advice on cost-effective healthy eating habits; and to reinforce life skills during meal time including proper table etiquette.

All the children looked forward to the meals which were served every day that the Programme was in session, for the year under review. They were served with water as a policy of the Programme to promote health, proper hydration and to balance sugar intake. Juice however, was served on special occasions such as parent workshops, staff meetings, sports day and prize giving.

“The Programme is refreshing for the children because in some cases the alternative is to babysit a younger sibling after school. In addition, in some cases, the daily meals provided are the children’s dinner for the day.”



“A big ‘pull’ factor is the cooked meal. Many of them don’t have the money to buy a big lunch, so when they can get a cooked meal, many of them appreciate it.”

Teacher Training & Feedback

The holistic approach of building resilience in children generally demands the strengthening of the Programme/teacher/child relationship. With children at risk, it becomes even more crucial because the burden of these children’s educational welfare and its attendant issues are oftentimes borne by the school teachers.

According to one teacher “some parents feel that just by sending their children to school, they are doing an excellent job: that their job is finished. Our children are in a deficit and we have to get them to normal and only then can we expect certain things from them. **So having them working towards a sports day or a concert, or getting stars or learning a skill at the CRP is beneficial to them.**”

Another teacher pointed out: “I think the parents’ concept of school is ‘day care’, or time away from the child. The parents don’t understand the severity of children experiencing complex trauma. They complain that the child is not doing anything at school but don’t understanding the link between poor academic performance and child abuse and neglect. If children have other things on their minds they can’t learn. Even if you open their brains and sew the information in it, they’re not going to grasp it.”

Over the year of intervention, strong relationships were built between most of the guidance counsellors of the feeder schools and the Programme teams at the YMCA and Boys Town Centres. This greatly helped the Programme intervention and was undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the success of the project.



In February 2016, **fifty grade-five teachers in twelve feeder schools were trained in strategies for managing bullying and behavioural challenges in the classroom including identifying early warning signs for physical and sexual abuse and risk for violence.**

In year one the number of girls referred was fewer in numbers in all categories as according to the referral criteria more boys were overtly noticed by the teacher to be fighting and displaying delinquent behaviour. With teacher training and sensitisation and an improved ability to identify children who are at risk including the withdrawn behaviour of girls, more girls were referred in year two and an even greater number of girl referrals is expected in year three.



An **unplanned outcome** was teachers learning more about their students e.g. their competitive nature, and love for the performing arts. They therefore used this knowledge to stimulate their students at school – placing them in competitive groups/clubs after school.

“I’m using the star system in my classroom. That is something praise worthy from the Programme.”

The teachers for the most part, confessed that the Programme achieved its goal which was evidenced by the bonding, sense of belonging and family feeling among the children who attended, which offered a positive alternative to the risk of engagement in gangs.

Of the referred children who were at high risk of dropping out of school at the start of the academic year, 90% were no longer identified as being at any risk of dropping out of school.

Their testimonials say it all. The teachers are indeed hopeful for the future of this cohort of referred children:

“A marked improvement seen overall: one girl now thinks about what she has to say before she says it. She’s more in tuned with herself. I expected her to react negatively to all that is going on in her life but she’s a much calmer child. She was moving towards the depressive side before joining the Programme. Now she seems a little more positive and calmer. She’s been internalising her parents’ issues and she’s learning more and more to focus on her academics. She’s working it through.”

“She stands out as someone whose attitude and mannerism has improved. She’s quick to accept correction.”

“Sometimes they just want someone to listen to them and speak with them. I realise that the parents are not listening to them or speaking to them. The home is not playing the part that it should. It’s just guidance that they want. They have the ability, the potential to go very far. Sometimes they just need an avenue to shine. They are saying if you give us a chance, we’re not going to waste the opportunity.”

“She was really unstable but with the inner peace, and self-discipline to behave appropriately I think it will take her a far way in the future.”

“They invited me to their Programme leaving ceremony and they were proud of themselves. One girl gave a speech testimony. Their self- confidence has improved. They are stepping out of their shells and saying ‘this is who I am’ and not being afraid. Their work attitude has changed.”

Another unexpected outcome: *One teacher observed that the competitive nature instilled by the reward and recognition Programme at the CRP has triggered a competitive streak in the children’s classrooms at their respective schools. Other children not in the Programme have now become quite competitive. **“They’ve recreated the competitive atmosphere at the Programme in their schools quite unintentionally. The attitudes being taught in the Programme is filtering in the classrooms at the children’s schools. This is self-directed learning and a great evaluation of the Programme.”***

*“Sometimes we as teachers have unrealistic expectation of the children at that age. We must remember where we are, the culture, the kind of children that come to us, **some of these children have not learned how to express what is going on inside of them. I see the Programme as helping the children to find an identity, to explore themselves to see if they are good at anything and to start working on that because the moment they find something that they are good at, look at these girls and out of that you can teach them so many life lessons – because, you’ve won their hearts, you’ve gotten them excited.** We can’t give up on them. It’s about working with them until they find something and then use that thing. **Through the CRP helping them to find something that they connect with is the best thing to propel them into self-value and hope for the future.”***

“Get the teachers involved at the CRP especially for those children whose parents are not coming to the parent meetings. Invite us to the parent workshops. It will show the children and parents that we care about them. I want to go and see what was so interesting that everybody wants to go to the Programme. I want to see for myself what’s happening at the Programme.”

Facilitation

The Boys' Town facilitators were recruited mainly from within that community and therefore already had a strong existing relationship from year one. The death of the Boys' Town coordinator in the first term of the year under review shook the community and the Programme significantly but a replacement was found and things began to run smoothly again. The facilitators at the YMCA centre who were brought in from outside, bonded as a team over year two.

Generally, facilitation and operation of both centres went well. On-going training of the facilitators remains necessary including classroom control and age-appropriate focus. According to one facilitator:

"The volunteers and facilitators have to have on-going training to deal with the challenges of teaching these children. I don't think the children are un-trainable, they proved it on the final day in how well-behaved they were. We, the facilitators need further wisdom and skills to deal with the challenge of moulding these children. Training of course includes 'on the job', experience."

Additional comments from the facilitators include:

"What is norm to them is unacceptable to us and we react to it. We have to expect their norm and mould them to an acceptable norm."



"For classroom control, I reinforced the rules/standard at the start of each class and that helped. Having them start immediately helped. The tips shared at staff meetings helped. So the better prepared I was, the better the classroom control. I tried to find out what they liked...what stimulated them. But I myself had to learn to be controlled and not to respond inappropriately to certain disrespectful and aggressive behaviours."

"The children opened up in discussions with a variety of topics. One talked about suicide, runnings with the police, and challenges with siblings."

"There was beauty in watching the facilitators grow e.g. the drumming teacher not just teaching drumming, but stopping to have a rap session with the children: and offering a mentorship/ role model"

“At Boys’ Town on Thursdays we’ve added a quiz session/competition between the houses to help stimulate the children. A big stimulation for us was when Uncle Camion the boxing teacher was a contender in the well-publicised Wray & Nephew boxing competition. We all watched it.”

“We had several counselling sessions. Each time we address the issues; they go back into their environment and take a step backwards. We don’t punish them; instead we try to engage them to get to the root of some of their problems.”

Unplanned outcome: *“Positive change in the facilitators themselves increased self- esteem and self- efficacy. Increased resilience in the facilitators themselves. Unplanned positive sharing of information and relationships among the two partner organisations and among the facilitators at field trips.”*



Relationships with other stakeholders, church members, private organisations and clubs have greatly helped the work of the Programme as invaluable donations came in from Sun Island T-shirts, Grace Kennedy, Jamaica Broilers Group assistance in the provision of food supplies as well as several individuals donating behavioural prizes and Christmas treats for the children. Money Gram through First Books gave a donation of some 2,000 children’s novels which were used as behavioural prizes and contributed to a library for the children. One feeder school in particular provided free transport and sending teachers with the children to assist in their supervision continued to be very helpful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

&

LESSONS LEARNT

- More presence at the schools & work closely with the grade 5 teachers from the feeder schools. In addition to the principals and guidance counsellors, the Programme needs to interface directly with the grade 5 teachers as sometimes crucial information is not transferred to the classroom. This increased presence will facilitate feedback of behaviour and academic performance of the children to the teachers and Guidance Counsellors throughout the academic year with a view to maximise the progress of the children. In addition, the grade 5 teachers could be invited to some parent workshops to encourage dialogue and strengthen the holistic approach. This should also stimulate increased and constant attendance of the children.

- More efforts at creating community cohesion and inclusiveness by using the sporting events to bring together persons from the various disciplines and to take ownership of the existing social issue

- Value of consistent attendance of children and the importance of follow up of those absent. Continued effort needed to ensure constant attendance of the children so that they can benefit fully from the intervention of the Programme. Effort is needed to document and research the reasons why they are absent out and address those issues.

- More girls to be identified and referred as being at risk for gangs and violence as compared to Year 1 when there was 66% boys referred. Girls are just as much in need of intervention as the boys and are often even more at risk for violence, exploitation and abuse and vulnerable to gang involvement. Continue to sensitise and train teachers in the identification and referral process.

- More on-the-ground facilitation of the Programme needed in the referral process at the schools at the beginning of the school year. The schools are extremely busy in September with competing priorities and although they are already familiar with the process, they need the help in finalising the details of the list of referred children.

- On-going training of facilitators. The staff/facilitators/volunteers are mentors to the children and therefore are playing a critical role in providing alternate positive relationships. They require a lot of training and support themselves. Funds should be sought to do on-going training and at least one annual facilitators training workshop.

- More home visits and family counselling sessions. Including on-going dialog with the Child Guidance Clinics and the Child Development Agency. In-depth family counselling is required for more of the referred children

and therefore another counsellor needs to be in place . Also, the need to budget for “in kind” incentives to attract parents to attend monthly meetings.

- More Parents' buy-in/ on-going communication with parents: should improve with more home visits
- On-going partnership with the Police.
- Additional persons needed re: special needs children (with learning disabilities)
- Include professional psychological intervention in the programme to support the existing guidance and counselling being given; as well as to handle the extreme cases.
- Sensitise ancillary staff – canteen operators and bus drivers to some extent, are daily influencers of the children. They too, need to be sensitised to the objective of the Programme.
- Engage practicum students at universities as volunteers. Overt effort needed because of the distance from the universities.
- Baseline and other literacy assessments to be done after the first half term when the referred children are confirmed and 'settled' in the Programme routine.
- Effort needed to avoid stigmatising the Programme as one for "violent and abused" children or "children in gangs" but rather leave it as it is now known as an after school support initiative. This will help with the "buy in" by the parents.
- Weekly themes need to be more incorporated by the sports and creative art(cultural) facilitators.
- Copies of the outcomes, indicators, expectations and guidelines should be distributed to staff at the beginning of the school year and keep them at the forefront throughout the year.
- Professional assessment of suspect cases with learning disabilities and trauma at the beginning of the school year.
- Sustained bonding and sense of belonging through social media. Facebook 'friends' needs to be designed and maintained to act as a buffer against engagement in gangs for Programme leavers. Also partnership with other initiative (e.g. Fight for Peace) to foster follow up intervention for Programme leavers.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The Programme has, once again, met its objectives on all counts: the children have demonstrated an increase in resiliency, increase in their literacy, protection from violence and abuse, and a reduction in risk for engagement in gangs and violence.

The Child Resiliency Programme creates togetherness. The children from warring communities who traditionally would not ‘cross borders’ have learnt from each other that there is another way of living. By playing together, staying together, winning and losing together, they have become friends and shared their experiences in their ‘coloured houses’ creating a sense of union and community cohesion.

For year three, referred children, (players) their parents, coaches, teachers, community police, church and community organisation members will be brought together to further share ideas and dialog around the issues. This social process will allow these persons more of an opportunity to connect. More partnerships to support overall needs will be developed between the schools, private sector, community organizations, clubs, churches and police as conversations between the disciplines will be held initially at the sporting events. This will support further inclusion and community cohesion.

The Programme ran a lot smoother in year two with most of the teething pains from year one ironed out. Integrally linked to the improvement of children’s attendance was increased ‘buy in’ from their parents and increased involvement of the feeder schools (especially the grade five teachers and the guidance counsellors). The Programme can look forward to continued strengthening all around in year three.

“This Programme is about learning how to work together and being friends with one another, to share and be loving; and how to respect each other. The Programme help us to work together, and if you have a disagreement, instead of fighting to say ‘I’m sorry’ and shake hands and hug it out till you get back to working at what you were doing.”

Child Resiliency Programme
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September 2015 – June 2016

