



CHILD RESILIENCY PROGRAMME
FALMOUTH
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; and to ensure its sustainability.

The CRP targets children (ages 9-12) at risk for violence and abuse through feeder schools in and around its centre in Falmouth, Jamaica.

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 Model

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

For 2015-2016, a total of 40 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:

Programme Output for 2015-2016

- 7 facilitators trained at a workshop held in September 2015.
- Termly parenting workshops attended by an average of 10-15 parents: 10% males & 90% females
- 40 children (65% males & 35% females) attending afterschool activities three times per week; with daily completion of attendance registers.



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% demonstrated an increased love for learning and reading.
- 90% increase in computer literacy 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. This safe supportive environment reduced risk for entering into a life of gangs and violence.
- 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 learn and take part in the sporting and creative activities at and outside the Programme.
- 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

increase in politeness, less fighting, less cursing.

Improvement in Anger Management & Conflict Resolution

- frequency and intensity of conflicts: hitting, pushing, name-calling, threatening and bullying were significantly reduced.

The Programme has, once again, met its objectives: 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.



INTRODUCTION

The Child Resiliency Programme (CRP), through its umbrella organisation, Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA), has secured funding from the Tourism Enhancement Fund, to achieve the following objective, starting 1 September 2015 for 24 months:

To identify and build resiliency in a cohort of 40 pre and young adolescents ages 9-12 years, who are 'at risk' for violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

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 40 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 Model

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



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 its Falmouth Centre, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The activities offered were rotated between 4 'houses' at each Centre:

Falmouth Centre	
Activities	Feeder Schools
<p>Meet: Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Literacy Circle Time Art & Craft Dancing Football</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Daniel Town Primary Falmouth All Age Granville Primary Hague Primary & Infant Bounty Hall Primary Refuge Primary</p>
Parent Workshop: once per term	
Nutritional support: a meal was served every day	
Annual Sports Day; Mid-term Behavioural Prize-Giving; End-of-term Prize Giving & Awards Ceremonies & Concerts	
<p>Reward & Recognition Programme: 4 different coloured 'houses'/teams of up to 10 children each.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The leading 'House' won a prize field trip at the end of each term.</p>	

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

Focus group discussions and individual interviews were carried out with the referred children, teachers/ guidance counsellors, parents and facilitators. Referral forms outlining the criteria were completed by the Guidance Counsellors/ Grade five teachers to indicate why each child was chosen to attend the Programme. Interviews were also conducted with the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator as well as the Executive Director of the Programme. In addition, termly site visits and regular telephone contacts were made to monitor attendance and the effective delivery of the programme. The data was quantitatively and qualitatively analysed to provide the below information.

Programme Centre by Gender			
		Falmouth Centre	Total
Gender	Male	26	26
	Female	14	14
Total		40	40

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 evaluation findings have also been posted on the Child Resiliency Programme's website; and were shared at the Programme leaving ceremonies at the Falmouth Centre which was attended by parents, 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 Behaviour Change Committee, and at the Boards of the Ministry of National Security and Restorative Justice.

FINDINGS

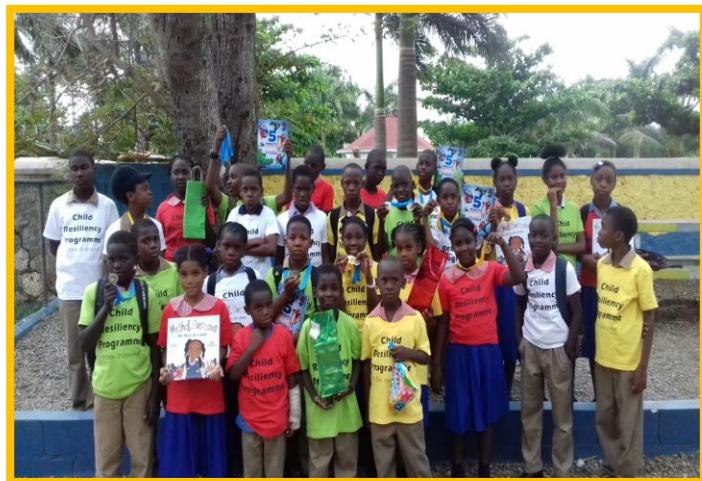
The **Programme Outputs** for the year under review are:

- 7 facilitators trained at a workshop held in September 2015.
- Termly parenting workshops attended by an average of 10-15 parents: 10% males & 90% females
- 40 children (65% males & 35% females) attending afterschool activities three times per week; with daily completion of attendance registers.

Attendance

Attendance registers were completed daily at the 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. On average 30-35 students out of the 40 referred were attending on a daily basis.

The attendance and punctuality affected the full impact of the sessions. Several issues affected attendance and punctuality: transportation issues; late dismissal of the children by their feeder schools; participation in school field trips, events or extra-curricular activities; family commitment; and inclement weather.



Getting parents to come out to



parent training seminars also proved to be very challenging. To improve attendance, prizes (phone cards) and surprizes were distributed to the parents who attended. This improved the attendance dramatically.

THE SIX ARMS OF DELIVERY

OUTCOMES & INDICATORS

1. Academic Support To Increase Literacy

Outcome #1

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

Children 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 display 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

For the year under review, all 40 children (100%) who attended the Programme took part in literacy activities.

“My child learn a lot of things. She can read and she can write.”

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



The intake of children saw approximately 80% of the children reading well below their grade level (grades 1-3). The Literacy teachers worked with the children at all grade levels but paid special attention to those reading below their grade levels. They worked with the children at their pace with sound blends, listening and reading skills and spelling. In addition to story-telling, self-expression through letter and story writing, the computer was also used with interactive software to stimulate interest in Literacy among the children.

Assignments were given from workbooks. 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 of the Centre who counselled the children and spoke with their caregivers where necessary.

For the year under review, 75% of the children demonstrated an increase in literacy by one grade level.

“80% of the children in the Programme are not at their reading level and they were all at very different reading levels.”



“For Literacy, we pinpoint the students who are in need of special attention and gave them individual coaching. This was refreshing when compared to the regular school with 40 children in one class. The Programme definitely met its objective for this year. The children have improved by at least one grade level. They are now interested in reading because of the technology used. Half of the students are slow learners. The Literacy teachers had to tailor their time to meet the needs of the variety of literacy levels.”

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.

“According to the parents and facilitators, some children improved in their literacy. One boy passed his GSAT for a traditional high school and his mother was quite pleased with



his level of improvement since quite a bit of his GSAT preparation took place at the Programme because his teachers were not interested in him because of his poor behaviour in class. So he depended on the Programme for support. There was definitely increased love for learning and reading mainly with the girls.”

2. Life Skills Training, Mentoring & Spiritual Development & 3. Sporting and Creative Activities to Reinforce Life Skills

Life Skills Training is employed to build moral, physical, social, cognitive, spiritual and emotional competencies. **Exposure to and participation in the life skills activities provide avenues for creative and emotional 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.**



Outcome# 2

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.

From the outset, it was clear that aggression was the children’s first response to solving issues as most of the students live in violence-prone communities in Falmouth. **Some have even lost a parent or loved one to violence or have a parent incarcerated because of violence. The children are therefore, products of their aggressive environment. This indicated the need for anger management and conflict resolution skills for both the parent and the child.**

Although most learnt to call on an adult when there is 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.

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

“I see changes in myself since coming to the Programme. Certain things that I used to do I don’t do it again, like if somebody hit me, mi usually fight them but I kind of stop doing that.”

“Sometimes people get me angry and I have a very bad temper but I’m learning to control it better.”

“Once the children were engaged and showing interest in an activity, there was better control and a decrease in the number of fights and conflicts. Sometimes they used conflict to get out of an activity that they don’t want to participate in. Conflict went down to a minimum and they grew more patient and tolerant of each other. After a while, they started looking out for each other and working together to keep their stars.”



“I have seen behavioural changes in all the children, some more than others. This Programme has done some wonders. Two students in particular, were extremely aggressive and now there is a shift. Instead of going for a fight, they come to the teacher to complain about their potential opponent. I am much appreciative of the Programme and will assist in ensuring that it continues.”

“I used some counselling techniques that I taught some of the other facilitators, to see how best we could deal with the disruptive behaviour of these students, and surprisingly,



by the end of the year, students were able to sit still, to complete a task, and follow instructions. There was great improvement and their schools sang the praises of the Programme noting the dramatic change in some of the children.”

“Learning to work with each other was a challenge at first. Some of them, if they don’t like you, if you’re not from their school, they don’t want to work with you. We showed them the benefit of working with other persons. We had to constantly remind them of the importance of staying in their houses because we had a lot of ‘jumpers’.”

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

The children’s reality 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.** 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 and child.



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.**

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

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.

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.

“One student lost his mother in his early years and as soon as he hears anything about a mother, he goes off about it. He’s dealing with it a little better now. He smiles and we can get more out of him. He goes to his teacher when he’s feeling low. He’s established that relationship with her who hugs him in the mornings when he goes to school. Generally, the children are feeling better about themselves.”

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.

The children came into the Programme displaying inappropriate behaviours: being disorderly, speaking out of turn, easily aggravated and affected by their peers and not showing respect for each other and their supervisors. There was a clear need for guidance in, and positive reinforcement of, life skills training including self-discipline, teamwork and other social courtesies.

One Life Skills tool used at the Programme to address this was Circle Time where the children were given an opportunity to discuss their issues and topics which followed the 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.**

"Participation level was very high with life skills because it took the form of discussions. They were always ready to share. But the behaviours taught were not reinforced in the homes and therefore it was challenging to maintain consistency throughout the year."

"My child had an attitude problem and with the Programme, she has been improving a lot. Seriously, a lot."

"I see something more progressive in him like him get to understand more and behave and talk to me 'bout what's going on and when him go out, what's happening and I'm satisfied to see what's going on."



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.

The children confirmed that they communicated better with their parents since being in the Programme; that they feel better about themselves; and that they had a goal in life and felt hopeful about the future. They wanted to be soldiers, teachers, a veterinarian; scientists; police officers "like Uncle Miguel"; hotel managers; and bank tellers.

Creative Expression to Reinforce Life Skills (art & craft)

The main objective of Creative Expression is to reinforce what is taught in Life Skills training including helping them 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. 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.



Sewing and gardening were added to the activities during the year and there are plans to include baking as well.

The children performed at the Programme 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.

Sports to Reinforce Life Skills (football)

Sports was used as a tool to inspire behaviour change and teach important life skills for example anger management, team building, building self-esteem, decision making and self-discipline.

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.**





Like the Creative Expression arm, football employed the Life Skills learned: football built tenacity, perseverance, team work and conflict resolution - all ingredients of a resilient character.

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.



By the Programme Leaving Ceremony in June 2016, there was a notable improvement in the children’s social skills, an increase in politeness, 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.

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

“The teachers are good, kind, caring and loving to us. That’s what I love about being in the Programme.”



All children who have been identified to be at risk and referred to the centre 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’s always room for improvement.**

“The Programme is about helping us to be better students; to be polite when people talk to us; changing our behaviour; to be kind; don’t fight; don’t curse; respect everyone, respect yourself; respect others and respect property.”

“I like when I ask the teachers some questions, they respond. Auntie, I like most of the activities.”



“Because of their low reading levels and low self-confidence on entering the Programme, hands-on activities work better for them. We have fewer fights, they are more focused, and competitive, everyone wants to be the winner; everybody wants to have their work on display. We the facilitators were thinking that come next year, we would increase the art and craft and probably sell some of their artwork to the tourists who oftentimes come around to see what we are doing.”



“By the end of the Programme, they were participating more. One girl was very shy and was not interactive and introverted, and by the end, was participating in activities so much more and her self-confidence really grew.”

“The gardening has taken off and the Principal wants this to be extended to the entire school. The children out in the garden were so engaged; they were manageable; they followed instructions. It was a pleasure to watch them. Self-confidence became very apparent with these activities and they are willing to try it again if they weren’t successful at first.”

“There are definitely some changes in the children’s ability to communicate with their peers and teachers. I can’t speak to their relationship with their parents because the parents don’t come. There has been improvement in the children’s self-esteem and grades over the year. One student would shy away from everything and now there’s a remarkable difference with her. She’s now willing to answer questions even in class and she’s more outspoken.”



“My daughter has an attitude problem. She has improved. She has learned how to control herself.”

“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 them both. That’s what’s engaging the kids, that’s what’s keeping them out of trouble and keeping them out of risk. The fun, the sense of belonging, the comraderie, self-control, discipline and teamwork – all critical components of our success”

Dr. Kim Scott, Executive Director

4. Parent / Family Counselling and Training

A key objective of this arm is to **build 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.

“This Programme has helped me in a way that me and my daughter getting more closer because in the evenings she come and talk with me. It is good.”



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

The report by parents of improved parental communication and using appropriate discipline was significant for those attending 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. All parents who attended expressed improvement in their attitude in general as well as to their children; they also reported better control with their own anger as well. The parent attendance has remained at approximately 12-17. Great efforts to reach the parents continue to be made including calls, texts, and incentives (meals and phone cards).



“Some parents would actually put what they learnt in the seminars, into practice and consult with the facilitators re handling issues at home. “Teacher I try this yuh nuh but they still fighting”

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, to listen to their children, to never give up, to give a little extra love and time, and to

realise 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).

Parents and children also benefited tremendously from family counselling and home visits. At Phone calls and texts were also employed. There is room however for improvement on this area. Overall, 10% of the cohort of children underwent family counselling.

“We saw an improvement in parental involvement and more parents came out to the parenting seminars. Even if they could not stay, they would still come for a short time. They were some home visits and out of this, there are three cases we would like to keep on for the coming year. Two of them are abuse cases at home and the Programme is the only outlet the children have; and the other’s mom suffers from a mental disability which has negatively impacted his home environment. Since coming to the Programme,



he has shown much improvement. Even his class teacher has made the request to keep him on.”

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.

“My daughter is enjoying herself and at evening time she can’t wait to get on the bus to come to the Programme and when she get the homework, she put out her best to do the homework.”

“The Programme has helped me tremendously because to have a better relationship. They’re excited to go out and meet new friends and feel more comfortable and uplifting so we share it so we all enjoy it.”

5. Nutritional Support

An integral part of resilience is nutrition. 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 table etiquette.

Meals were served every day of the Programme for the year under review. They were served with water as a policy of the Programme to promote health, proper hydration and to balance the sugar intake. Juice however, was served on special occasions such as parent workshops, staff meetings and prize giving.



July 2016



“For quite a large number of them this would be the only meal for the day.”

“Many of the parents send the children because this is their dinner; because the children are guaranteed a dinner three times per week.”

Facilitation

The Falmouth facilitators were recruited mainly from within that community and therefore already had a strong existing relationship from year one. Generally, facilitation and operation of the Falmouth centre went well. On-going training of the facilitators remains necessary including classroom control and age-appropriate focus. According to one facilitator:

There is also a close, on-going partnership with the Police.



Unplanned outcome: *“Positive change in the facilitators themselves including increased self-esteem and self-efficacy and increased resilience in the facilitators themselves.*”

“We the facilitators have to be creative in planning our activities according to the weekly themes, to keep them stimulated and motivated. We don’t get their full potential just having them enclosed in a classroom.””

Relationships with other stakeholders, church members, private organisations and clubs have greatly helped the work of the Programme as invaluable contributions came in from Sun Island T-shirts, Rosehall Great House, Falmouth Port, Royalton White Sands Resort, 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 LEARNED

- 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.
- Value of consistent attendance of children and the importance of follow up of those absent. More 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 exploitation 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
- 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.
- 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.

At least two parent seminars in the term.

- Weekly themes need to be more incorporated by the sports and creative art 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.
- The facilitators should taking time to pray for the programme and the children by name, in a deliberate manner.
- Explore adding numeracy to the services - for a more rounded academic support.
- 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 (eg Fight for Peace) to foster follow up intervention for Programme leavers.
- Include additional activities to give them a new reason to come.



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. Seeds have been planted.

The Programme ran a lot smoother this year with most of the teething pains ironed out. Though improved, consistent attendance of the majority of the children remained a challenge. Plans are in place to make every effort to ensure that the referred children of year three benefit from one solid year of Programme intervention. Integrally linked to the children's attendance are 'buy in' from their parents and increased involvement of the feeder schools (especially the grade five teachers and the guidance counsellors). Once these are in place, the Programme can look forward to vast improvements all around in the coming year.

“The children loved coming to the Programme because the environment was not one which highlighted their negatives; no corporal punishment was administered; and they were able to express themselves through the life skills activities – creative arts and sports. They felt safe; for those coming from Daniel Town, Refuge, Bounty Hall, Hague, it was the only opportunity they got to leave their communities so it was quite exciting for them. Even the bus ride excited them. So for them, every evening that they came to the Programme would be a new adventure – something different. They enjoyed the exposure and it stimulated increased self-esteem and behaviour change.”



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Falmouth
Annual Evaluation
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