

Closer to Home



Regional Strengthening in the Jamaica All Age Schools Project



Closer to Home



This publication examines the impact on regional strengthening as part of the Jamaica All Age Schools Project (JAASP) which ran for 3 years between 2000 and 2003. The direct beneficiaries of the project are the children and communities in the most disadvantaged, remote rural areas of Jamaica. JAASP specifically aimed to tackle the key issues of Access, Quality, Retention and Equity in relation to rural education. One of the underlying principles behind the project has been the building of partnerships between schools, parents, communities, Ministry of Education officers and the private sector to develop improved lifetime opportunities for rural children.

The voices of different participants are included here and are evidence of the project focus on 'learning for all'

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Regional Strengthening in the Jamaica All Schools Project

Patricia Daniel

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Regional Strengthening in the Jamaica All Age Schools Project**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CREO	Community Relations Education Officer
EO officials)	Education Officer (used as a generic term for all Ministry
G&C	Guidance and Counselling
JAASP	Jamaica All Age Schools Project (used also in relation to the 48 project schools and project activities)
SEO	Senior Education Officer
RD	Regional Director
RDP	Regional Development Plan
REO	Regional Education Office
TEO	Territorial Education Officer
SN	Special Needs
SIP	School Improvement Plan / Planning
TA	Technical Advisor (full-time specialists employed by the project)
TEO	Territorial Education Officer (providing direct support to schools)

INTRODUCTION

The Jamaica All Age Schools Project

Funded by the UK Government Department for International Development as part of its programme to eliminate poverty, and in collaboration with the Government of Jamaica, JAASP worked with 48 remote rural All-Age schools from April 2000 to May 2003. These schools, located in clusters in each of the six education regions of the island, were afforded the lowest status by the community at large, being characterised by

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

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

The overall purpose of the project was to provide better education for children in poor rural communities and, through this, to contribute to improved lifetime opportunities for them. The direct beneficiaries of the project were the children and communities in the most disadvantaged, remote rural areas of Jamaica. There were wider benefits for all through the development of sustainable systems at central and regional levels.

The key underpinning principles of the project can be summarised as follows:

- respecting, and building on, the existing work of Jamaican educators
- involving all stakeholders through a participatory approach
- developing ownership of the project through autonomy and accountability of stakeholders
- engaging parents and the community in the life of the school and their children's education
- including community development as a key component for sustainability
- recognising diversity within the classroom
- developing a learning culture: a focus on learning for all and on everyone sharing what they have learned

There were several main components to the project, which interfaced with each other to provide a holistic approach to tackling the multiple problems identified in the baseline survey. These were:

1. Community/ School Participation
2. School Management
3. Quality of Teaching and Learning
4. Strengthening Regional and National Systems
5. Teaching and Learning Resources
6. Minor Rehabilitation Works
7. Lesson Learning

Strengthening Regional and National Systems

This paper has a focus on the impact of JAASP on the six decentralised regions of the Ministry of Education and highlights this component as one of the key factors in the sustainability of the gains of the project. While the nature of involvement throughout the project - and the pace of upscaling of project initiatives - differs between regions, there is clear evidence to suggest that many aspects of JAASP are becoming institutionalised at school and regional level. Drawing on data collected by questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group discussions and review meetings, the paper analyses the involvement of Education Officers, how the project has impacted on them – and how they have impacted on the project. It raises issues about the rôle of Education Officers, their approach to their work and their capacity to become agents of change. Ultimately there are implications relating to MOEYC structures and the need for central support in the institutionalisation of innovation.

Patricia Daniel
Series Editor

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School Development Planning and School Management
Patt Flett

Literature-based Approaches to Teaching Literacy
Kevin Walsh

Special Children, Special Needs
Patricia Johnson

The Rôle of Participation in Change
Mary SurrIDGE

Sharing Problems and Solutions: Link Study Exchange Visits
Ray Mace

Changing the Future: Impact Assessment of the Jamaica All Age Schools Project
Pat Daniel

A Sense of Self Worth: Action Research in the Jamaica All Age Schools Project
Dasmine Kennedy

THE REGIONS

The Ministry of Education decentralised part of its operation in the late 1990s through the creation of 6 Regional Education Offices (REOs). Government supported this move through the provision of new purpose-built buildings in each of the regions. One of the objectives of the Jamaica All Age Schools Project was to strengthen this regionalisation process through working closely with Education Officers in the field. In this way, JAASP differed from other donor projects in that it did not have EOs seconded to the project on a full-time basis.

The 3 Technical Advisors were based in 3 different regions, working from the REO. Each had special responsibility for the project schools in 2 regions (a total of 16 schools each) as well as an island-wide responsibility in their specialist area. (See administrative map on page 6).

Technical Area	Base	Regions
Literacy	REO 2	1 and 2
Community Participation	REO 4	3 and 4
Inservice Training	REO 5	5 and 6

Rôle of the Education Officer

Support for schools is provided through a system of Primary and Secondary Territorial Education Officers who each have responsibility for a school cluster; for example in one parish in Region 5 (St Elizabeth) there are 3 TEOs for Primary Education, each having a cluster of 25 schools. TEOs work from home and are thus relatively isolated, spending a lot of time 'on the road', an arrangement which means there is little culture of teamwork. Each region has one Community Relations Education Officer, one Guidance and Counselling Officer and a number of Early Childhood Officers who work with Basic Schools and Infant Schools. While each REO may be organised slightly differently, the pattern is generally the same, for example in region 6:

Post	Number
Regional Director	1
Senior Education Officer	2 (Primary and Secondary)
Secondary TEOS	4
Primary TEOs	8
Early Childhood Officers	10
CREO	1
Guidance and Counselling	1

In addition the work of the REO is supported by its own Finance, Administrative and Personnel staff and other specialists such as the Building Officer.

Issues arising from the Baseline Survey

Information about the work of the EOs was collected, through means of a questionnaire and focus group discussions with a sample of EOs from 4 regions. A major area of concern was the amount of time that had to be spent by Education Officers in a range of data collection from schools, including panel inspections, without having the skills or opportunity to analyse and use the data effectively in their work. Education Officers felt they did not have sufficient time for other activities such as: providing general school support; in-service training; or monitoring the implementation of school development plans. Demands on Community Relations Education Officers to provide Parenting and Life Skills workshops were very heavy and often could not be met, as there is only one CREO per region and there was also a lack of material resources to support this area of work. In addition, the 'all-purpose' rôle of the CREO meant they were often called to support general activities such as panel inspections, thus reducing the time for specialist community relations work.

Indicators for Regional Strengthening

A number of TEOs and CREOS were involved in the national Baseline Feedback Workshop (see Daniel et al, 2000) helping to review all data from the Baseline Survey.

They were also involved, along with Regional Directors and key personnel from the central MOEYC, in the subsequent workshop (see Dearden, 2001) which reviewed the objectives of the project and refined the indicators by which the success of the project would be evaluated. It was through such participatory mechanisms that we hoped to develop a sense of project ownership among EOs and a team approach to its implementation.

As regards regional strengthening, the indicators focussed on the following aspects:

- ◆ regional planning
- ◆ provision of in-service training and facilitating teacher development
- ◆ systematic professional development of Principals
- ◆ school development planning
- ◆ development of resources through Regional Resource and Study Centres
- ◆ additional support to schools in remote rural areas especially in aspects such as Special Needs, Guidance and Counselling
- ◆ school-community relations, especially involvement of parents in school development planning
- ◆ inter-agency co-operation to support development of school-community relations

One area of need, highlighted in the Baseline Feedback Workshop, was training in the management and analysis of data at regional level. However, it was not possible to address this aspect properly during the life of the project, partly because it was seen as a component of both the New Horizons and JAPIP projects. Another issue raised was the need to redefine the rôle of the CREO; this was considered by the MOEYC to be outside the scope of the project, although the project certainly contributed to redefinition.

Involvement and Rôle of EOs in JAASP

A small number of EOs were closely involved in the project throughout. Involvement was, however, largely a matter of chance: it depended on the current allocation of TEOs to schools and which schools were nominated to take part in the project. As one EO told me: *“Basically I didn’t have a choice!”* Differences in organisation between the regions thus meant a wide variety in EO involvement. In some, only one EO had all 8 JAASP schools in her cluster while in Region 2, all 8 Primary EOs were involved because each happened to have responsibility for one of the project schools.

There are obvious advantages and disadvantages in each scenario. For example, one EO can more easily multiply learning to all the schools in her cluster (both JAASP and non-JAASP schools) developing experience and expertise that can then be shared with colleagues towards the end of the project. On the other hand, 8 EOs are more likely to ensure cross-fertilisation of ideas across the region and begin upscaling of innovation during the life of the project, which did already seem to have happened in Region 2. Those EOs working on their own expressed the view that it would have been preferable not only to share responsibility but also to have someone to share ideas with.

A related issue is that of the additional workload brought about by involvement in JAASP. Attendance at project meetings and workshops and a greater involvement in the development of their designated project schools necessarily meant additional demands on the time of EOs who already perceived their workload to be heavy. Even though her Regional Director may be supportive of the project, the EO concerned was also required to complete all her other work to deadline. The EO working on her own was seen by her colleagues as ‘Ms JAASP’ without necessarily understanding what that meant; the implication seemed to be that this wasn’t ‘MOEYC work’.

Suggestions from the EO impact assessment workshop (February 2003) of ways in which this situation could have been alleviated, include:

- ◆ greater co-ordination
- ◆ reduction of number of schools for the officer
- ◆ a clearer understanding of the implications and long term benefits of the project
- ◆ a higher degree of consideration for those EOs involved
- ◆ a temporary person (teacher or principal) to support the EO
- ◆ taking more of the training to the regions
- ◆ sharing of ideas & more co-ordination of activities
- ◆ someone sitting in at the corporate plan meetings

It also took some time before the rôle of the ‘JAASP EO’ became clear to the officer involved:

“It wasn’t until we got down to the School Improvement Planning that I understood that my rôle was to ensure preparation and implementation of the SIP so that the project schools could access the funding.”

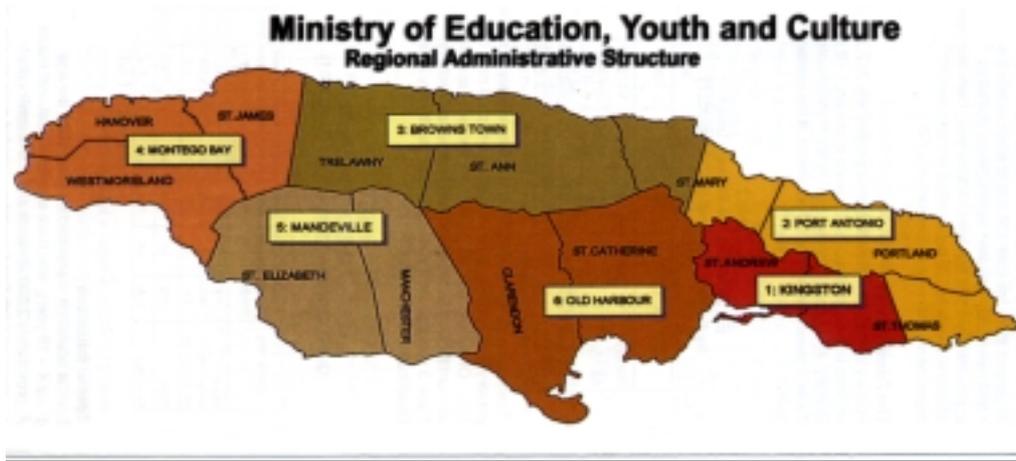
In order to provide adequate guidance to their schools, most JAASP EOs felt they needed to attend most of the workshops:

“I like to know what my Principals are being told.”

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Like the TEOs, the CREOs, who are only one per region, were automatically involved because of the Community Participation aspect of the project. However, their level of involvement also varied between regions; this may be partly due to personal choice and partly to the support provided the region for their involvement. Through working with a larger team in Region 2, the CREO and her work obviously became more integrated into regional developments. However, while the CREO in Region 3 was also closely involved in the project throughout, this didn't necessarily mean a closer working relationship with the TEO (although her understanding of the importance of community relations was enhanced through the SIP process).

Certain circumstances were outside the control of the project: for example, in Region 4, the JAASP TEO was on study leave / annual leave for the second year of the project, and during the life of the project there were two changes of Regional Director and two changes of CREO. Despite the fact that both new directors were supportive of the project, there was an impact on regional development due to this discontinuity. However, redeployment can in some ways be regarded as a positive factor, in that it can contribute to the spreading of ideas: one TEO in Region 6 moved to another parish, one RD from Region 4 moved into central MOEYC as Deputy CEO. As one EO told me: *"the skills don't leave with them"*



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Number of education officers involved				
REGION	In all / most project activities	In Regional Development Planning	In scaling up region-wide (planned)	In specific activities
Region 1	2 TEOs (West and East zones)	4 including 1 attached to Media Services	2 (to non-JAASP schools in their cluster) Literacy SIP Pastoral Care Emergent Literacy	3 Regional Study Centre Guidance and Counselling, Community (CREO)
Region 2	12 including the Regional Director, 2 Senior Education Officers, CREO, 1 officer attached to Media Services and 2 Early Childhood Officers	12	All Literacy SIP Pastoral Care P3E (CREO) PLA (CREO) Emergent Literacy for early childhood teachers	1 Guidance and Counselling
Region 3	2 including CREO Initially 3 TEOs but in Year 2 all 8 JAASP schools devolved to 1 TEO	All	All SIP Literacy Performance Management	1 Guidance and Counselling
Region 4	1 designated officer for all 8 schools	All	All SIP	1 Guidance and Counselling
Region 5	1 TEO who had all 8 JAASP schools in her cluster plus 1 officer seconded from PDU as training officer	All , plus Building Officer, Personnel, Administration, Finance Officers	All SIP Performance Management Pastoral Care Cluster Facilitator training	2 Guidance and Counselling, Community (CREO)
Region 6	2 TEOs	All involved in discussion/ review 4 in drawing up the final plan, including Regional Director	All from September 2003 SIP Literacy Pastoral Care	2 Guidance and Counselling, Community (CREO)

Table 1. Number of Education Officers involved in JAASP activities

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

1. Institutionalisation:

To what extent have the project objectives for regional strengthening been achieved?

While the nature of EO involvement in JAASP differed between the regions, it is clear that most regions are now beginning to upscale JAASP initiatives and to institutionalise them (see Table 1). Sonia Madden told me:

“Region 5 has been one the forerunners in buying into the JAASP model. Other officers began to realise the pluses and wanted the benefits, so they started to ask for workshops. Our colleagues are very co-operative, they liked us running workshops for them.”

One key factor in this is project support for strengthening Regional Development Planning, which for the first time has involved a more participatory process, with a wider range of stakeholders sharing and setting targets and reviewing plans. Training in aspects such as SIP, Literacy and Performance Management will now be cascaded to other EOs. This we hope will mean that, although not all EOs were involved in the project itself, there will be greater collaboration, better integration and a common approach between EOs in the future. As Fay Blake says:

“SIP has been the catalyst for the region, it has shown us the importance of target-setting, it has helped to propel people forward and formulate programmes. The Regional Plan has been developed on the same model. All primary schools will be expected to use the SIP. Our next step is to introduce it into secondary schools.”

Study Tours to UK have also been a contributory factor in regional development. Visitors to UK in different groups included: all 6 CREOs; 7 RDs / EOs for regional management; 8 key personnel from MOEYC central units (in relation to Guidance and Counselling, Maths and Literacy) in addition to representatives from other educational institutions. The wider impact of these visits is not the focus here and the reader is recommended to read the paper by Ray Mace (2003) on the subject. However, one aspect to highlight is the integration of Guidance and Counselling and national pastoral care developments into JAASP, through the study visit and subsequent involvement of Guidance Counsellors in training for JAASP Principals.

“In the future we need linkages between trained and untrained schools, for example, all schools who don't have a trained counsellor in the vicinity of a JAASP school, could gain from their attitudes and experiences in pastoral care – which is everyone's job.”

Jackie Moriah, Guidance and Counselling Officer, Region 1

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One further factor to note in terms of regional development is the influence of the Technical Advisor's specialist area. While having general responsibility for their own schools, it is clear that there was a particular emphasis on the development of specific aspects of work. This can be seen as a positive factor, as different innovations were piloted by different TAs in their regions. For example, Emergent Literacy in Regions 1 and 2; the development of Public-Private Partnerships in Regions 3 and 4; Performance Management in Region 5.

To summarise this section, one comment from the EO workshop in February 2003 on the impact of the project:

“Institutional strengthening; building of capacity at regional and national levels (EOs, link visits): lessons already institutionalised in many areas.”

Through JAASP

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

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

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

12 EOs in Region 5 trained in Performance Management for schools

12 EOs trained in community mobilisation and parental involvement

2 officers from the Early Childhood Unit and 1 EO from Region 1 involved in piloting Emergent Literacy strategies

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

10 EOs attended Curriculum workshops

9 EOs attended Family Literacy workshops

9 EOs attended Learning Support workshops

JAASP Literacy Coordinators and 11 EOs attended Literacy Coordination workshops

10 EOs attended Special Needs workshops

Reproduced from Daniel (2003)

2. What impact has there been in general on the work of Education Officers?

At the island-wide impact assessment meeting for Education Officers on 28th February 2003, three key aspects of the project were highlighted in relation to their work.

◆ Participation and Partnership

In particular, the project had demonstrated to EOs the importance of community involvement and stakeholder participation at school level:

“Parents asking questions at meetings, making decisions, planning for learning, not just a concern for the physical building...” (Ram Bailey)

“Communities were therefore empowered as they became involved in the decision-making process on issues which affected the lives of their children” (Fay Blake)

EOs felt they needed to continue to be involved in the planning process. There was also recognition of the importance of the wider collaboration, which had been enhanced through the project: for example, school-region relationships, interagency links and private-public partnerships.

“Partnership in education is not far-fetched: it involves everyone” (Region 2 team)

◆ Developing a regional focus

Education Officers felt that the project had facilitated the process of “responding to regional needs”. It had encouraged clearer linkages to be made between school supervision, school improvement planning and the regional corporate plan. The provision of regional resources and study centres meant “resources are closer to users”. Developments in Guidance and Counselling at a regional level had also been enhanced.

◆ Support for teaching and learning

Confidence, skills and understanding in relation to teaching and learning had also been developed among EOs. This included awareness of diversity in the classroom and “*a more realistic approach to students with special needs*”; as well as understanding “*the impact of literacy on the total education of the child*” and “*an organized approach in addressing the issues that relate to literacy improvement*”.

In addition EOs had developed “*awareness of the need for resources to support teaching and learning*”; and, not least, “*EOs are more comfortable working with the technology - computers / projectors.*” Piloting new methods in literacy and numeracy teaching was seen as valuable and action research had helped to become “*more aware of the problems and ways of dealing with them*”.

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Table 2: Analysis of Project Impact on Regional Strengthening
(Extracted from Minutes of EO Meeting, February 28th 2003)

<i>What project has done</i>	<i>Evidence of implementation</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>How sustained</i>
Regions 1 & 2			
Provide model / framework	Plans developed Sustainability Achievements – national & regional targets Strategic objectives	Regional focus Responding to regional needs	Review, implement, report Linkages - SIP & corporate plan Interagency linkages National and international partners
Regions 3&4			
Seminars/workshops Provision of resource room & study centre	Study centre Cascading of SIP model Improved school supervision Empowered teachers / stakeholder	Increased IT skills Standardization (SIP) Improved attendance & performance	Periodic retooling, evaluation & reviewing Monitoring Provision in recurrent budget Partners in Education
Regions 5&6			
Workshops - regional and central Training of TEOs Equipping resource centres in region Training of teachers in pastoral counselling	Guidance & Counselling Draft for regional plans Resource centres in operation in REOs and Teachers Colleges Workshops and seminars conducted	Collaboration between schools and regions Input from SIP to develop RDP Resources are closer to users	Support from central office Monitoring at regional level Stakeholder support (partnership) Continuous promotion of resource centre Ongoing training of Guidance officers

3. Individual Impact:

What impact has there been at a personal level on those Education Officers most closely involved in the project?

Professional development

While involvement in JAASP meant additional commitments, all EOs felt they had gained in terms of their own professional development. Attending training workshops, being trained as trainers and delivering workshops themselves, taking part in study visits and multiplying learning, working closely with the TAs as part of a team – these were all cited as factors which contributed to:

“better preparing me to do what I’m supposed to be doing.”

As the Region 2 team put it:

“Officers were exposed to a wide range of strategies in overall school improvement planning, particularly in human resource management and in strengthening institutions; “minds-on”, “hands-on” approaches in community participation and supervision; creative ways of getting the job done without ‘tearing out one’s hair!’”

“Thanks to JAASP, I feel more confident and my knowledge base has been strengthened.”

Goldie Simpson, Region 1

The importance of training

While a lot of time was taken up with training during the project, the “significant benefits” of this were recognised by (and for) all:

“Great emphasis was placed on the development of human capital, hence representatives from the various stakeholder groups were immersed in extensive training programmes which provided learning support to facilitate the effective delivery of education.”

Fay Blake

*“Training is paramount, not only for those we work with, **but we as well need training.**”*

Sylvia Henry also emphasised the point that “*training needs to be closer to home.*” JAASP had shown the value of school-based training, of meeting the real needs of educators in the field. “*They must feel the training on site, that it’s relevant to them, delivered in a situation which resembles their own.*” In addition, she felt she had gained a better understanding of needs: “*It helped me to look again at my expectations of people – I learnt that we can’t assume they know how to do things.*”

Officers’ own training skills had been strengthened:

“I personally benefited from the approach used in training.”

“Strategies in group presentation and feedback in training sessions.”

Their confidence and capacity for cascading training in their region was emphasised - although there was some suggestion that this training rôle was not always positively perceived: “*I noticed in other regions EOs were less keen on being trained by their peers.*” An additional point is that: “*EOs need to keep informed of current trends.*”

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Target setting

In particular training for, and implementation of, School Improvement Planning was seen as a key learning point for all:

“It showed the importance of target-setting, of using data effectively and of involving / empowering the community.” (Fay Blake)

“It provided a structure... (whereby) stakeholders were brought together... they helped to analyse the situation in the school to determine what the school and community did well and what they could do better.” (Sylvia Henry)

“A more structured approach to School Improvement Planning and how to involve the community as an important strand in education.” (Region 2 team)

Principals need to be accountable to the School Board; they’ve got to be able to produce test results – hard evidence of improvement. School Board Chairs need to be able to ask serious questions of Principals if there is a problem.” (Sonia Madden)

Perception of rôle

Another significant impact was on the perceived rôle of the Education Officer, which traditionally has been seen as “**supervisory** rather than **advisory**”:

“It broadened my outlook, encouraged me to work in a more facilitative way, allowing Principals to breathe a little: before I used to impose my own ideas, now I try and get their ideas. At one cluster meeting I asked the Principals what they thought my strengths and weaknesses were; they told me ‘We want you to give us guidance and advice, to work alongside us.’ I now give Principals the opportunity to share and present in workshops: I just sit back and do nothing!”

Sonia Madden, Region 5

“It helped me to refocus on our core function. We don’t have enough time as EOs, we have too many things to do, schools get short-changed in the process. JAASP helped me to streamline what I should be doing....”

Sylvia Henry, Region 6

Several officers agreed that “*we are also beneficiaries*” of the project although others still saw themselves more as the conduit for JAASP to impact on schools. However, Fay Blake (Region 3) conceded that:

“EOs have become more integrally involved through the SIP, working from firsthand knowledge, following every step of the way and giving the necessary guidance.”

A family atmosphere

One aspect of JAASP that will be missed is the 'family atmosphere' that was engendered through attendance at workshops with EOs and Principals from other regions:

"I looked forward to seeing other faces... it was enriching... our circle was enlarged... we all had the same focus and the same problems... everyone valued what we all had to say."

Sonia Madden, Region 5

"Through those regular meetings JAASP provided the opportunity to work through ideas."

Sylvia Henry, Region 6

Becoming an agent for change

Through their on-going work with JAASP a number of the officers have become agents of change. While JAASP has impacted on them and their work, they have also had, and will have, an important impact on education themselves. For some this is a matter of conscious choice, for others it is 'accidental', like their initial involvement, stemming from the fact they were 'in the right place at the right time'. Much of this impact will be through training colleagues to cascade initiatives at regional and even national level. It will also involve 'championing' certain aspects of practice and demonstrating the effectiveness of particular models. Some impact will come about through the motivation that JAASP has provided for individual EOs to continue learning and developing their own expertise – and to speak out about the need for national changes.

Sonia Madden, for example, introduced new Maths teaching / learning methods into some of her schools after her Regional Management Study Visit to UK, before the Maths Study Visit took place. Four of her schools are now involved in the national Maths pilot. She has also begun studying in her spare time for a doctorate, aiming to focus on the area of Special Needs and then having an influence on developing in-school support for students at risk.

For Sylvia Henry, involvement in the project has raised issues about the structure of the MOEYC, the rôle and approach of Education Officers and the nature of support for schools: *"We're doing a lot of things right but the bureaucracy and structure constrains us."* In order to initiate discussion at central level, she has produced a pamphlet for wider circulation, in which she highlights her vision of the future (see insert).

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE

To what extent has the project facilitated the development of quality and quantity of support provided by TEOs / REOs to schools?

In order to answer this point, the views of project Principals were sought through the administration of a simple questionnaire at their final group meeting in May 2003. A total of 37 Principals (representing 75% of project schools) responded. The responses are analysed below.

Changes in relationships between EOs and the school (Principal, teachers, students and community members)

While 6 responses indicated no change, with relationships "remaining cordial", 14 Principals replied that their TEO had good relationships with all stakeholders, especially through involvement in SIP: *"sharing of ideas; greater inputs"*. A further 13 specified that relationships had improved: *"a more teamwork attitude"; everyone is more relaxed in the presence of the EO"; officers are much more accommodating: they make suggestions rather than order persons around"; "an improved social interaction"*.

One or two Principals noted that the relationship tended to be between Principal and EO: *"Principals and EOs work more closely so that new concepts learnt can be delivered in the best possible way"*, while others highlighted the development of contacts between EOs and community members, especially parents: *"our EO has made home visits which helped in attendance"*.

Only 3 Principals indicated they were not happy with their relationship with their TEO, suggesting the supervisory rôle was still in force: *"Teachers feel the EO is biased and never praises their efforts."* One of these schools was however (happily) able to say: *"The school has improved immensely, therefore we have been getting good comments."*

Changes in the rôle of the Territorial Education Officer

About 75% of the Principals in the sample indicated their perception of the rôle of their TEO as an advisory one: *"to encourage, participate in school programmes and plans"; "motivate"; "nurturing and support"; facilitative and mentoring strategy approach"; monitoring, making recommendations and commendations"*.

"The EO's rôle is to work along with the institution in the upgrading of skills and the enhancing of effective learning."

Among these, two Principals specified the rôle of the EO in JAASP to *"see the project works well"*, and two others reported a greater clarity of approach:

"More formatted and structured. Seen as a friend and confidante. Much more purposeful."

In addition, 3 Principals highlighted the rôle of EOs in organising cluster meetings and workshops as well as attending JAASP training so they could support implementation.

However, 6 Principals indicated that the rôle to a large extent *"remains traditional. She collects statistics and looks at lesson plans"; "supervision"; "gives instructions"*.

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Two more suggested some change: *“changing role but very slow to do so”; “attempts are being made to use JAASP Principals to train others”*.

Frequency and nature of school visits

As regards frequency of visits, over 35% (14) of the Principals expressed satisfaction (two or three times per term) and 3 others emphasised that visits had become *“more frequent and focussed”* during JAASP. Of the rest, where visits were irregular, in the case of 8 schools, the reason cited was bad weather and difficult road conditions. However these Principals still valued the EO input: *“Schools visits are rare but meaningful when made”; “when visiting a considerable amount of time is spent with the school”*; and contact was also maintained through numerous telephone conversations. For 8 other Principals, visits were both irregular and unsatisfactory, tending to be for data collection and performance appraisal only.

The nature of professional development activities

45% of Principals in the sample emphasised the value of the training aspect through JAASP:

“Training was provided at different levels for different people at different times. These workshops and seminars have been of great benefit to all involved in the teaching/learning process.”

“This training has broken down barriers and to date is bringing Principals and EOs together at a cluster level.”

A further 45% highlighted the value of cluster meetings (organised by TEOs) and local workshops which had been enhanced through JAASP:

“Cluster meetings with other non JAASP schools... Sharing of experiences... JAASP Principals and teachers are usually asked to run the workshop... We help the other Principals with their SIP.”

A further 3 schools referred to support for, and development of, school-based training workshops: *“INSET – every Monday; team planning; parenting workshops”; “our EO has been too and helped us in group activities”*.

Relationship with the Regional Education Office

Around 25% of the sample indicated they had good relationships and support from the Regional Office: *“response to queries excellent”; “efficient staff members”; “support in problem solving, recruiting teachers”*. However, for another 25% it was clear there was minimal contact with the office and that, for the majority of project schools, their relationship with their TEO was of the utmost importance:

“Demonstrates the facilitator’s rôle and also ensures there is on-going communication. A tower of strength in helping us understand and implement programmes planned.”

Wider support may become more established in Regions 3,4 and 5 when their regional study centres are up and running, providing an additional resource for (all) schools. Nevertheless, the reliance on the TEO, particularly for these remote rural schools, is likely to continue and this has implications both for sustainability and workload.

NEW WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER

As a key aspect of the project was the development of participation and partnership, this section presents two case studies to illustrate how individual Education Officers have initiated and promoted new ways of working together.

REGION 5 STUDY CENTRE

Principals from the 24 schools in Sonia Madden's cluster, including the 8 JAASP schools, got together to decide on a new location for a study centre, since the designated school (Beersheba) was inaccessible for much of the year due to the rains. They decided on Holland Primary School, which was not a JAASP school but which was centrally situated. However, this meant that they had to build an entirely new structure, rather than redeploy existing space. A Task Force was elected from the group to work on planning. The final design was approved by the regional Building Officer who, according to regulations, added bathrooms, a kitchen and a ramp for wheelchairs.

Two Open Days were organised to raise funds for the new centre, by selling crafts and produce from different schools and a range of other activities. The proceeds were used to pay for construction materials and a local builder to carry out the work. Each of the JAASP schools sent down 2 men each week as labourers, whom they paid for 4 days' work with the 5th day being worked free. A separate bank account was set up for the enterprise.

Mrs Doctor, the Principal of Holland, had day-to-day oversight of the building work, supported by a small committee of 3 other Principals to make quick decisions on work in progress. While this incurred extra work for her, it was recognised that Holland students and teachers would have free access to the centre when ready. A new decision, to have a flat roof in order to have the chance to build a second storey when funds allowed, had to be approved by the Building Officer. Mrs Doctor and Mrs Madden became experts in assessing the quantity of building materials needed. When completed, the centre will provide the base for the monthly Principals' meetings, teachers' workshops and other educational events for the cluster; it may also be used by the neighbouring cluster and can be rented out to other organisations. It will be equipped with a multi-media projector, photocopier, computers and internet connection and one plan to help the centre 'pay its way' is to allow local secondary school students to use the internet in the evenings for a small fee.

Additional funds are needed in order to complete the work and support was being sought from several sources, including the local MP (who was willing to contribute something from their allocated Social Fund) and Holland Estate (from where they obtained the materials).

The construction of the study centre is a major achievement in collaborative planning and management, for what will be a valuable shared resource, which has also provided local employment and enhanced community involvement.

Visit, June 2003

REACHING OUT AND GARNERING SUPPORT FROM BUSINESS

In March of 2002 the Jamaica All Age Schools Project sponsored six (6) Community Relations Education Officers (one from each region) for a visit to United Kingdom. Of particular interest to me was the involvement of the Public Private Partnership in Education (P3E) This is an activity which is a part of the Local Education Authority (LEA) in UK. As a result of the visit I was motivated to organize the **Portland Public-Private Partnership in Education (P3E) for Region 2.**

This had its genesis in May 2002 when a workshop was held to sensitize the business and service clubs in the region to JAASP and its overall objective of improved lifelong learning and opportunities for poor rural communities. To this end, Bob Hunter and Bob Marshall from the Wolverhampton Education Action Zone shared information on the UK model for business and education partnerships. The aim of the workshop was to produce a workable business/education plan, using the reference manual provided and exercises which explored issues in the region.

The partners on the board include: Jamaica National Building Society, whose manager, Mr Paul Martin, chairs the P3E; Singer Company; Ivanhoe's Guest House; Armstrong's Haberdashery; Tim Bamboo Hotel; Chenel's Pizza; Jamaica Information Service; Portland Co-op Credit Union and an educator (returned resident from the UK). Although the group is small, regular monthly meetings are held.

Achievements so far include the following: one-week computer training for 8 classroom teachers; prioritization of wish lists from 8 schools; contact with businesses at local level; solicited support from Urban Development Corporation for a Basic School for Bybrook; a pledge of \$4000 towards purchasing a stove for Bloomfield All Age School; adult education classes in English and Social Studies progressing to exams; and family literacy classes for parents.

Future plans include sourcing tools and equipment for community projects; on-going computer classes for more teachers; and a Festival to showcase school / community talents. Members also plan to visit more schools and recruit more businesses to get on board. The P3E has raised awareness of the role of businesses in the support and sustainability of local schools.

Janeann Allen, CREO, Region 2

SUSTAINABILITY

Principals' perceptions

As regards Principals' perceptions, 65% of the sample expressed confidence that changes brought about through the project would become institutionalised at the level of their own school. Examples cited include:

"Performance management. Literacy Window. School Improvement Plan. Writing Frame."

"I believe there will be positive changes in attitudes and values as a result of this project. This will live on because of the exposure to strategies developed by teachers, parents, students and community members."

"Trend for academic success is evident. Goals for personal development will be retained. Plans for sustainability are in place."

"EOs, teachers and students are much more prepared and ready to do their part in seeing that the programme will impact positively."

A further 20% emphasised their perception that wider institutionalisation was already taking place:

"Many of the JAASP components are being adapted by non-JAASP schools."

"By applying and implementing the training, there should be positive changes in the overall delivery of education / professionalism / student performance."

Others highlighted the collaborative process, which was nurtured by JAASP, as the key factor in sustainability:

"Community relationships, teacher / pupil relationships, the whole ethos changed for the better... These changes are here to stay... We will continue working together."

Education Officer perceptions

Similarly, those EOs interviewed believed that many aspects of JAASP could be sustained:

"There are things that don't rely on funding, for example, the literacy strategies, the SIP, the study centre"

"People have multiplied the training, they don't take the skills with them."

As regards sustainability of the participatory approach, **School Improvement Planning** and **school-community relations** were seen as key factors.

"If SIP includes all stakeholders, this is going to have an impact on other EOs, the process will be coming up from the schools, EOs will have to recognise stakeholder viewpoints and advise on implementation."

"Community involvement is more difficult to institutionalise – CREOs will play a key rôle in establishing school-community links."

"The most creative Principals will be able to do this – the structured approach is already there."

Closer to Home

The adoption and development of the **Public-Private Partnership** model was seen as a key mechanism for sustaining funding for social projects for JAASP (and other) school communities – not only income-generating activities but also educational activities such as Family Literacy.

The new **Regional Development Plans** will play an important part in sustainability and upscaling as they begin to institutionalise aspects of JAASP through the **cascading of training** to other EOs and, through them, to all schools. EOs closely involved in JAASP will play the rôle of change agents in this process.

Nevertheless, there was a consensus among EOs at the meeting on 28th February 2003 that **on-going monitoring and support** will be necessary for JAASP schools to “see them going”. Limitations on EO time may make this difficult and that is why **Performance Management training for Principals** has been recognised as an important factor in sustainability. This may also involve reorganising school structures, for example, making plans to provide for teachers taking on a higher level of responsibility.

The EO meeting also highlighted the need to continue **celebrating success** and **sharing best practice** through group meetings (and maybe an annual JAASP workshop to keep in touch, continue developments, develop new ideas, as suggested by SM). This will partly depend on education leaders at central and regional level helping to promote a **greater culture of teamwork** and a review of EO rôles and responsibilities.

In summary, while the future looks reasonably bright, it could be argued that sustainability on a wider level may still rely on a relatively small number of key officers maintaining personal motivation and gaining official support in order to continue multiplying what has been learned and developed throughout the project.

LESSONS LEARNED

The forcefields analysis below aims to summarise the key lessons from reflection on the involvement of Education Officers in JAASP with a view to identifying issues to be addressed in the replicability of this model in future projects (in Jamaica or elsewhere).

Hindering Factors	Helping Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Problems in communication (partly to do with physical difficulty of contacting EOs, partly related to planning and organisational factors within JAASP) ◆ Workload and perceived rôle of TEOs / CREOs ◆ JAASP not perceived as MOEYC work ◆ Issues over data collection and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Project vehicles made access easier ◆ Close relationship with Technical Advisors ◆ EOs involved in all JAASP activities ◆ Sharing the load. Teamwork ◆ Refocusing on EO core function ◆ Support of Regional Director ◆ Taking responsibility ◆ Ownership by EOs ◆ Understanding longer term benefits of the project ◆ National data planning committee (established at the end of the project, an on-going development)

CONCLUSION

The project has had a clear impact on regional development and on individual EOs (both in their capacity to perform their existing rôle and their capacity to work as agents of change). This impact is not only in terms of support for remote rural schools, which was the focus of JAASP, but also in terms of wider application.

However, despite its achievements in introducing and supporting a range of initiatives, the project was unable, during its lifetime, to impact significantly on the following aspects:

- ◆ the perceived rôle of the TEO within the Ministry of Education
- ◆ revision of the rôle of the CREO
- ◆ the workload of EOs (except negatively!)
- ◆ the streamlining of data collection
- ◆ systematic training of EOs in the use of data for planning and evaluation

As regards the last two items, the formation of the National Data Planning Committee, initiated by Patt Flett (TA) at the end of the project, is a major contribution to future development.

Nevertheless, the project has had an impact on the ethos of educational planning, the relationship between EOs, schools and communities and on perceptions of the value of education itself in remote rural areas. There are positive indications that these gains can be sustained. As EOs commented:

“The project has promoted and marketed the MOEYC as an institution that is involved in lifelong learning”

At a central level, in reviewing rôles and structures, the Ministry of Education now needs to deliver on this.

APPENDIX

REGIONAL OFFICE SURVEY: DATA COLLECTED BY EDUCATION OFFICERS

Data capture and recording

- Annual school census – October
- Annual school census verification - February
- State of Education – July
- Quarterly status report
- Monthly unit report
- Panel inspection reports
- Readiness, NAP, Grade 4 Literacy, GSAT, Grade 9
- Enrolment and attendance
- Feeding programme
- Curriculum support materials distribution
- Report on school visit
- Monthly report
- Weekly report
- School incentive scheme, education project assessment form
- School incentive scheme, community relations assessment form
- Appraisal for promotion
- Teacher / Principal Evaluation

(NB. this is not a complete list)

Range of data collected: Report on school visit

- General information
- Organisation and management
- Records management
- Financial management
- Buildings
- Literacy
- Lesson programmes and teaching
- Staff assessment

(Taken from: Report on the Baseline Study, 2000)

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