

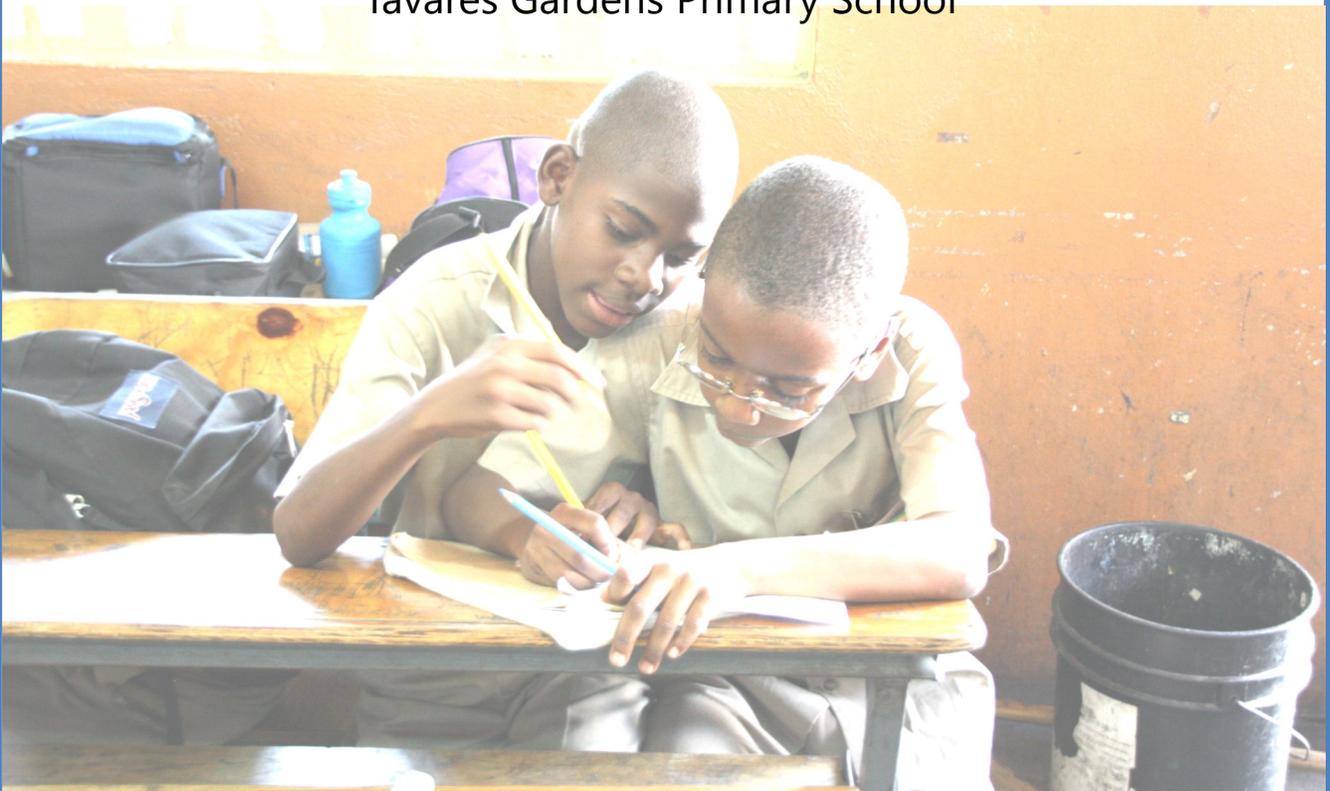
JAMAICAN SELF-HELP

Kingston/St. Andrew Schools Study

St. Peter Claver Primary School

St. Anne's Primary School

Tavares Gardens Primary School



P.O. Box 1992
Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
K9J 7X7
Tel: (705) 743-1671
Email: info@jshcanada.org
Web: www.jshcanada.org

October 2013

Acknowledgements

Jamaican Self-Help would like to thank the following people and organizations for their invaluable assistance with this study:

Students, teachers, parents and support staff of St. Anne's Primary School (Principal – Estella Forrester), St. Peter Claver Primary School (Principal – Karen Jackson-Reynolds), Tavares Gardens Primary School (Principal – Linnette Malcolm), Jamaica

Margaret Brissett-Bolt, Stephney Webb, Ministry of Education, Jamaica

Jamaican Self-Help Committee and Volunteers: Paula Wagar, Joyce Mackenzie, Darlene Stubbs, Nancy Chesher, Allison Bunting, Tanner Swann, Leanne Taylor, Marisa Kaczmarczyk, Canada

Research Support Team: Dr. Catherine D. Bruce and Tara Flynn, Trent University; Dr. Lynn Kostuch, Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, Peterborough, Canada

Canadian International Development Agency – Partnership with Canadians Branch, Gatineau, Canada

Executive Summary

Who is Jamaican Self-Help (JSH)?

Jamaican Self-Help (JSH) is a Canadian international development organization that has supported education and community development projects in Jamaica since 1980.

Among its projects JSH has supported activities at three primary schools in Kingston/St. Andrew, Jamaica. JSH school and community-based programs are all aimed at improving child education and social development.

What are the goals of JSH support in Jamaican primary schools?

From 2009 to 2012, JSH partnered with three primary schools in Kingston/St. Andrew: St. Peter Claver Primary School, St. Anne's Primary School and Tavares Gardens Primary School. Each of the three schools has taken part in a range of the following JSH-supported activities: 1) literacy and/or numeracy classes; 2) music/arts/dance; 3) sports; 4) clubs; 5) playground activities; 6) parenting outreach and/or workshops and/or volunteering; and 7) staff training.

By the end of 2012, the intended outcomes of these JSH-supported activities were:

1. Improved student literacy levels;
2. Improved student self-esteem and self-discipline;
3. Enhanced student ability to interact positively with peers, and reduce negative behaviour;
4. Increased parent confidence that they are "better equipped" to support their children.

What is the purpose of the JSH Kingston/St. Andrew School Study? How was the impact of JSH support measured?

From 2009 to 2012, JSH conducted a systematic study on the impacts of its programs to ensure they were effective at achieving their goals. The study was also intended to provide data to the participating Jamaican schools and Ministry of Education to further their efforts in implementing effective educational programs.

JSH collected information throughout the three-year implementation period. Through student surveys and interviews with administrators, teachers, parents and specialized community workers, JSH developed an understanding of important features of all three schools.

What are some of the key findings from the study?

Literacy Rates: Overall school literacy rates (Mastery level or at least a 50% pass in all components of Grade 4 Literacy Test) were noted at each of the three participating primary schools.

Literacy Results	June 2010	June 2011	June 2012
St Peter Claver	78%	82%	89%
St Anne's	53%	52%	57%
Tavares Gardens	61%	67%	32%

The results of St Peter Claver demonstrate that sustained attention to literacy combined with additional support programs has a positive effect. In this school, the JSH programs have been incorporated in school activity for almost 20 years so that students from Grade 1 onward have benefited from the enriched programming, boding well for Grade 4 literacy results.

For St. Anne’s Primary School, given that there were two incursions in the school community in this time frame, it is remarkable to find that the literacy results are constant, and do not in fact decline.

Tavares Gardens is the most recent participating school in the JSH supported programs. Since 2009 the school employed a literacy teacher with the support of JSH. The results indicate that having a literacy teacher does positively affect literacy rates, and has an important impact on the entire school standing and academic environment. The low results of 2012 are exceptional; the principal has reported that these results were due to a cohort of students with a higher than usual proportion of learning disabilities.

From the Student Surveys:

The JSH survey was administered to a total of 697 students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 at the three schools in Kingston/St. Andrew in June 2009 and 587 students in May 2012.

Participation in School-related Activities: Students were asked to report their participation in music, sports teams and clubs. Involvement in sports and clubs show the greatest increase:

	Music	Sports/Teams	Clubs	No activity
2009	36%	33%	35%	21%
2012	36%	44%	57%	18%

In addition, over the three year period the survey results indicate a significant improvement (5 percentage points or more) in three of the study’s components – ‘feelings about school’; ‘school learning’; and ‘student perception of family involvement’. These results reflect the areas of JSH-supported activities – academic support, personal and social development, and parental involvement:

Item	Percentage of Students who Agree and Strongly Agree June, 2009	Percentage of Students who Agree and Strongly Agree June, 2012
I am safe at this school.	65%	72%
The adults at this school treat me with respect.	61%	68%
The people at this school like me for who I am.	63%	68%
I am proud of my school work.	84%	90%
My teacher believes I can learn.	83%	92%
My school/classroom has lots of books that I can read.	88%	93%
My family thinks this is a good school.	84%	89%

Insights from Teachers, Parents, Administrators and Community Specialists:

Interviews were conducted with 3 guidance personnel, 3 principals, 18 teachers, and 18 parents at the three JSH schools. *Many positive features* of all three schools are identified including after-school programs supported by JSH. *Participants are extremely proud* of their school communities and work very hard to instil self-esteem and pride in their students. Participants also described how student behaviour, the school environment, parental involvement and general satisfaction with schooling were *all continually improving due to the JSH programs and team efforts* made at each of the three schools.

As one group of teachers summarized, 'There has been great improvement in literacy. Behaviour has improved. Students want to be outstanding.'

"The students think they are kind of stars. Our school no longer feels like a beaten stick. When the students go out, the community says 'What's happening?' A lot of respect is now given to the school. People have a different view of the school."

At the same time, participants identified a number of education related challenges in the community, school and at home. *Violence in the community and poverty are identified as barriers* to student attendance at school and involvement in programs. Further, *perceptions of the value of school vary* greatly from family to family and community to community. In the schools, *challenges of having the necessary resources* (including appropriate facilities) for sports and clubs make it difficult to run specialized music, arts, and sports programs. An ongoing concern is also the *high level of undiagnosed or untreated learning, physical or behaviour challenges*, even including basic hearing and vision limitations. Some testing has been done, but follow up treatment is not always pursued by parents due to cost, lack of available services and sometimes the perceived stigma associated with certain disabilities.

What is the overall recommendation at the conclusion of the study?

The model of effective school programming that JSH supports uses a holistic approach to education, and advocates the importance of developing the "whole" child – intellectual, social, cultural – within the context of a supportive family and community. The JSH three-year intervention study was driven by a belief that it is important to support children in their learning by focusing on the combination of academics and extra-curricular activities that build character, motivation, safety, and achievement as an integrated whole. The findings of this study reinforce the effectiveness of this approach, and in addition point to the concepts of *learning readiness* and *teacher/student efficacy* as fundamental to student achievement.

Learning readiness means that only once basic and social needs are addressed, can academic success be achieved.

The key theory of 'Efficacy' drives the integration of academic and social/physical learning of this study.

The most powerful way to increase teacher and student efficacy is through 'Mastery Experiences' (Bandura, 1997). Mastery experiences are situations where a student works hard on something challenging academically or socially, and succeeds. The student thinks: "I am really good at this – I can learn!" When this success is observed by the teacher or

coach, that adult in turns thinks: "I am a really good teacher. I can help students learn, even when it is difficult!" This cycle of mastery experiences, when repeated consistently, creates confident and capable teachers and students. The JSH project was multi-pronged to address student learning needs both academically and beyond with the goal of supporting opportunities for mastery experiences.

The three participating schools give a snap shot of the continuum of development effectiveness – Tavares Gardens has the newest programme and is in the acquisition approach phase ("we need more programmes for the students"). It has shown the most dramatic improvement over the three year period. St. Anne's is further along the continuum where it still requires attention to social /basic needs. Its success rates are improving gradually and have been maintained despite community instability and violence and other challenges. St. Peter Claver has had the longest support for extra and co-curricular activities and has a high academic success rate, high stability and internal agency among its staff; consequently it is refining its programmes and moving to new challenges (eg. shifting key focus from literacy to numeracy).

Notably all 3 schools continue to face daily poverty-related individual and community challenges, and must remain vigilant to maintain their achievements and continue to improve.

Based on the experiences of these three schools, the Study's final recommendations for educational support are:

- ◆ **Focus on social programmes that build stability and efficacy at both the individual and school level** as the foundation for education
- ◆ **Offer extra or co-curricular activities** as key components to academic success
- ◆ **Ensure adequate literacy and numeracy support** for children in early grades
- ◆ **Build parent and community ownership and pride** in the school to alleviate the impact of community violence
- ◆ **Instill enthusiasm for learning** among children through adequate academic support and positive reinforcement
- ◆ **Invest in long-term strategies** to ensure effective values and approaches to learning are entrenched in the culture of the school

It is the hope of Jamaican Self-Help that the findings of this study provide evidence that will reinforce the directions of the Ministry of Education which support and enhance effective education for all.