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JAMAICA APPRAISAL MISSION REPORT

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November 2005

Trip Report for EFA- Jamaica Appraisal Mission: (November 1-6, 2005)

A. Executive Summary:

Jamaica currently faces an enormous challenge to both public policy makers and key civil society actors – namely how to respond to the growing levels of violence and social alienation among a growing population of **unattached youth**¹, and the far reaching negative consequences of the unattached youth phenomenon on economic growth, social stability, local and national governance, along with core indicators in health, educational achievement and community welfare.

As part of its new “Sustainable Development Strategy for Jamaica 2005-2009”, USAID’s J-CAR Mission seeks to play a catalytic role in the pilot development of dynamic new basic education and livelihood development programming for **unattached young men 16-24**. USAID/J-CAR seeks to build on its ground breaking work in alternative education programs for youth 10-18 developed via its **Uplifting Adolescents Program (UAP)**, and it seeks to contribute evidence-based / field tested models to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture’s (MoEYC) ongoing efforts to address gaps in services to unattached youth via **Operation Phoenix**, and the Cabinet’s recently tabled **National Youth Policy** and overarching National Strategic Plan for Youth Development.

An **Education For All (EFA) Youth Challenge Grant** award from the USAID/EGAT funded EQUIP3 Leader with Associate Award mechanism, will provide both matching funds and unparalleled technical assistance in programming for out of school youth to J-CAR and the local implementing partner(s) involved in this innovation oriented learning partnership. This new activity has **cross sectoral support** (both financial and technical) from USAID J-CAR’s Health, Economic Growth, Democracy and Governance, and Education SO teams, and represents an important model to USAID Missions in other countries vis a vis effective cross-sectoral support to programming for out of school youth.

¹ Ministry of Education officials interviewed as part of this appraisal mission define “unattached youth” to be young people between 15-24 who are not currently participating in formal education, technical/vocational training, the country’s National Youth Service Program and/or regular employment.

This EFA-Jamaica Appraisal Mission Trip Report provides background on the growing phenomenon of unattached youth in Jamaica; describes the Education For All Challenge Grant program; documents consultations and site visits with key local stakeholders (including MoEYC) from Nov 1-5, 2005; captures a series of key learnings from these meetings; articulates a number of core recommendations re program design and implementation; and, outlines a series of next steps in program development.

B. Background: *Addressing the Needs of Unattached Youth*

According to the latest government estimates, there are currently in excess of 145,000 unattached youth in Jamaica.² These 15-24 year olds are predominantly young men, and they live in both urban and rural communities across the island. They have become unattached from traditional vehicles for **positive youth development**³ positive youth development such as schools, technical/vocational training schemes, entry level jobs or service learning opportunities; and because of their association with street level violence and crime, growing drug use and the spread of HIV/AIDS, they are a group of rising concern for a broad range of government and civil society actors alike.

Very limited comprehensive research is available that fully delineates the process by which these young people become unattached from positive youth development opportunities, but an emerging consensus within the government and NGO sectors sees a combination of specific **push and pull factors** at play, along with the impact of a number of **broader sociological trends** within Jamaica.

Some of the “push” factors postulated are: (i) **inadequate educational opportunities** for young male students within a formal school system still marked by “chalk and talk” pedagogies, high stakes testing, large class sizes, a lack of pre-vocational education streams, and a continued emphasis on authoritarian discipline in the classroom; (ii) **readiness and access barriers** faced by youth completing schooling with neither the test scores/ academic skills to qualify them for continuing education, nor their being the right age to enter HEART Trust vocational schemes or the National Youth Service program -- as low achieving, socially promoted, students often finish school at age 15 and cannot access Heart Trust programs or the National Youth Service program until age 17 or 18.

Some of the “pull” factors in evidence in Jamaica are (i) an emerging **youth culture** that questions many traditional family and community norms and conventions; and (ii) the presence of **community based factional groups / criminal gangs** in many urban neighborhoods that actively recruit young people and offer them a sense of identity, safety, economic opportunity, and belonging -- though which also involve them in violent street clashes and escalating waves of crime against community residents and their property.

² Estimate of 145,000 unattached youth provided by MoEYC during meetings Nov 4, 2005 at NCYD

³ See the appended article from the Ford Foundation-- “Broadening the Bounds of Youth Development” -- for a good overview of the concept of “positive youth development”

Finally, the broader sociological trends associated with growing numbers of unattached youth, are seen to include: (i) **breakdown in family structures** and related unstable home environments, along with decreased support to poor families through cuts in government social spending (ii) **economic stagnation** and lackluster employment generation in the private sector, which effects youth unemployment rates disproportionately ; (iii) **ongoing under-investment** in schools and technical training programs, along with apprenticeship or school to work transition schemes, (iv) a lack of **accessible reproductive health programs** or mental health counseling/guidance services; (v) high level of **exposure to violence** (in the community and in the family); (vi) a broad sense of **powerlessness and despair** in inner city communities and marginal rural settlements whose residents feel left out of public life and local or national governance.

In response to growing concerns about the phenomenon of unattached youth -- and interwoven challenges in the areas of public health, education, democracy and governance, and economic growth; and in concert with the Jamaican Government's ongoing development of a National Youth Policy and the Ministry of Education's expressed desire to better serve unattached youth; the J-CAR USAID Mission has identified an opportunity to take on a **catalytic role** in the piloting of new community-based vehicles for delivering positive youth development opportunities to unattached youth.

Building on the successful **Uplifting Adolescents Project (UAP)** -- which has served the needs of younger out-of-school-youth (targeting 10-18 year olds) and provided them with flexible re-entry⁴ routes into the formal education system -- the J-CAR Mission's Education team has generated support for a multi-sectoral (cross SO) undertaking that is rooted in a common commitment to positive youth development, and a cross-cutting interest in re-engaging unattached youth before they become a destabilizing force that undermines the core activities of USAID's "Sustainable Development Strategy for Jamaica—2005-09". Each of the 4 SO teams involved in this activity bring to the table important experience in work with marginalized youth (via youth friendly reproductive health services, community based economic development initiatives in poor inner city communities, non formal basic education programming, and civil society strengthening / conflict prevention activities), and all share a commitment to engaging other actors from government, the donor community, the private sector, community based organizations, neighborhood groups, parents and extended families, in a common effort to connect unattached youth with flexible, dynamic, scalable and sustainable positive youth development opportunities.

The J-CAR Mission's education team is especially interested in the Ministry of Education's expressed desire in collaborating with the proposed two pilot sites; most importantly the MoEYC's expressed interest in (i) supporting the selection of appropriate communities for the pilot sites, (ii) in linking this work with its new program of community- based Youth Empowerment Officers, and Youth Information Centers, (iii) in sharing capacity building opportunities between J-CAR and MoEYC activities, and (iv) in building the evidence base required to take this programming to scale

⁴ Uplifting Adolescents has in fact piloted *recruitment, retention, re-entry and re-routing* options for in and out of school youth – as defined by the attached EQUIP 3 Out of School Youth programming framework – though it has focused on re-entry programming for youth trying to reach JAMAL level 4 and/or achieve their GNAT (or 5% Equivalency High School Entrance Test) and then enter secondary school or technical training programs

as a means of addressing the Education Minister's expressed goal of "achieving significant impact" on the full cohort of 145,000 unattached youth in Jamaica.

C. Overview: *The Education For All Youth Challenge Grant Program*

In August 2005, the J-CAR USAID Mission won one of three Education For All (EFA) Youth Challenge Grant awards given to Missions via the USAID/EGAT-supported, and Education and Development Center's led, EQUIP3 Leader With Associates Award mechanism – the other two awards going to Missions in Uganda and South Africa.

The EFA Youth Challenge Grant initiative is designed to achieve 3 important goals within USAID's global efforts to address the development needs and aspirations of vulnerable populations of young men and young women. These goals are to:

- 1) **Facilitate** increased USAID Mission capacity to implement innovative, cross-sectoral youth basic education and livelihood programming.
- 2) **Support** innovative, collaborative and diverse approaches to youth basic education and livelihood programming; highlight effective elements of these; and articulate their potential for going to scale.
- 3) **Contribute** lessons learned and promising practices that result from the program to the emerging international youth development field.

The EFA Youth Challenge Grant program benchmarks its impact with indicators that track its ability to promote and strengthen cross-sectoral programming for youth; that capture its contribution to the design and delivery of innovative approaches to basic education and livelihood interventions; and, that track the shared implementation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that build the evidence base, and articulate the menu of proven programming models, required to mobilize new funding streams and engender long term sustainability of positive youth development programming.

The key to success within the EFA Youth Challenge Grant Program is the development of an effective and dynamic partnership between the winning USAID mission team, the Education Development Center's (EDC) EFA Technical Assistance team, and lead staff from local implementing partners -- along with the ongoing engagement other key local stakeholders in government, the private sector and the broader local youth serving community.

Partnership building takes place via a number of practical mechanisms (including site visits and technical assistance missions), and thorough a shared commitment to establishing the kind of communication and knowledge management protocols that support a vibrant "learning

partnership". A first step in such partnership building is often a joint appraisal and engagement mission, which looks to identify existing strengths and assets, to articulate key areas for shared innovation and exploration, and to finalize planning regarding award parameters and M&E priorities.

D. Appraisal Mission: *Building a Shared Vision*

From November 1-6, 2005, EQUIP3's Associate Project Director for Applied Research and EFA Technical Assistance team member, David James-Wilson, participated in an Appraisal Mission to Jamaica. This mission had five principal objectives:

- (i) Engagement/Relationship Building with the J-CAR Mission's Education team in order to better understand their existing and past experience with youth basic education and livelihood programming – with a focus on the Uplifting Adolescents Program (UAP).
- (ii) Engagement/Relationship Building with representatives of other J-CAR sectoral teams that have committed funds to this cross-sectoral effort – with the goal of better understanding their broader portfolios of programming and their strategic reasons for joining with the Education team to address the needs and aspirations of unattached youth.
- (iii) Engagement/Appraisal work with a sampling of local NGO's that represent the kind of local groups that will likely apply for the local award component of this shared program, and will lead on the implementation of the two planned pilot sites – with the emphasis on understanding existing capacity and appraising potential areas for technical assistance.
- (iv) Provision of focused technical support on the final design of the award parameters and implementation strategies – with a focus on linking the J-CAR team and local implementing agencies with a range of effective practices and state of the art models from other world regions
- (v) Shared engagement and relationship building activities between J-CAR, EQUIP 3 and key Government stakeholders within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture.

All five of these objectives were advanced via series of meetings documented in the attached Appraisal Mission activity grid. Each of these sessions contributed to some key learnings, and led to the formulation of a series of strategic recommendations and the articulation of a number of important next steps – all of which are captured in the final sections of this report.

Figure #1: EFA-Jamaica Appraisal Mission – Activity Grid

Appraisal Mission Activity	Overview of Discussion
A. Initial Briefing With J-CAR Sectoral Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientation to EFA Youth Challenge Grant award and EQUIP 3 mechanism, along with overview of EDC's role as project Leader - Brief presentation of Appraisal Mission objectives and the role/priorities of the various J-CAR sectoral stakeholders
B. Site Visit to Kingston YMCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of YMCA's UAP funded non-formal education programming - Emphasis on the YMCA's extensive cross referral to key public sector resources such as hospitals, child protection units, police officers and court officials - Review of key lessons learned re meeting the particular education / counseling and livelihood development needs of young men
C. Background Reading re (i) USAID/ JCAR's "Sustainable Development Strategy for Jamaica – 2005-2009" (ii) UAP(1), UAP(2) Reports (iii) Reports on the work of the Health team in the areas of Youth Friendly Reproductive Health services and HIV/AIDS prevention (iv) the TIP program re child trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Located work of proposed EFA Youth Challenge Grant Award within overall Mission Strategic Plan and the lead activities of participating sectors - Developed fuller appreciation of the strong foundation provided by the Uplifting Adolescents Program's 10 years of work with harder to serve populations of youth - Understood the overlap between proposed education/livelihood focused work with broader initiatives to improve health and safety of vulnerable children and youth in Jamaica
D. Meeting with PACT Acting Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief overview of historical development of the NGO membership driven PACT structure – including its ability to mobilize technical support across multiple sectors by drawing on strengths of member agencies core teams, its focus on M&E services to its members and donor community clients, along with its underlying emphasis on sectoral capacity building and the strengthening of community based responses to development challenges.
E. Site Visit to St Margaret's Resource Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of UAP funded basic education and pre-vocational skills development programming - Discussion of key impacts of UAP/PACT supported capacity building workshops on teachers attitudes/approaches and effectiveness with harder to serve young men - Review of existing education pathways for at risk youth, along with an analysis of key gaps and opportunities for new services - Overview of JAMAL and HEART Trust offerings
F. Site Visit to Western Society for Upliftment of Children (Montego Bay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of UAP funded basic education and pre-vocational training programs, along with overview of related UNICEF and ILO funded programming for vulnerable populations of children and youth (including working children, youth involved in trafficking, and street children) - Focused discussion on the importance of counseling/guidance services and the impact of PACT-supported capacity building for teachers - Discussion of key factors for success in programming for young men - Review of outreach services to public schools designed to prevent school abandonment, and to enhance basic counseling services.
G. Consultation Meetings with Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture and the National Center for Youth Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of the work of the National Center for Youth Development in the areas of (i) Policy Design and Coordination (ii) Program Development and Management (iii) Research and Information Dissemination - Overview of newly tabled National Youth Policy and National Strategic - Plan for Youth Development, new programming in the areas of Youth Information Centers and Youth Empowerment Officers (under the "Operation Phoenix" label), ongoing work in Student Government and Youth Leadership along with National Youth Service - Briefing on Minister's priority re developing "impactful" programs that significantly (and measurably) address the 144,000 unattached youth in Jamaica - Reflection on key gaps in education and livelihood services for unattached youth (including barriers to accessing NYSP and HSEP) - Discussion re possible locations for pilot sites and desirability of close collaboration/coordination of the EFA projects work with MoEYC's Operation

	<p>Phoenix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of best practices in effective programming for young men – both in Jamaica and in the region (particularly Barbados)
<p>H. Briefing on UAP by PACT-based Program Coordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of key achievements of UAP program and core capacity building and M&E interventions - Discussion of strengths of UAP model along with identified areas for improvement / existing gaps in services - Overview of key factors for success in programming for young men - Discussion re site selection/ partner development/ coordination with MoEYC programming
<p>I. Meetings with Sectoral Teams</p> <p>(i) Health (ii) D & G (iii) Economic Development (iv) Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed discussion re current programming priorities, and desired outcomes for EFA project - Review of health programming for at risk adolescents, and discussion re overarching efforts to develop “youth friendly” services - Review of D&G programming in the areas of violence prevention, conflict resolution and civil society strengthening, along with a discussion on the importance of clustering interventions to achieve maximum impact - Overview of existing support to MF and Enterprise development projects and discussion re possible links between youth livelihood programming and existing business development/micro-credit providers such as MEFL and the Biz Start program. - Recommendation that EFA project support youth to “formalize” (grow, stabilize) informal activities
<p>J. Final De-Briefing Session with J-CAR sectoral teams and other Mission stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of appraisal mission findings - Q & A re major trends in programming for unattached youth - Solicitation of advice re site selection and program focus - Discussion of possible collaboration with MoEYC

E. Key Learnings: *A Shared Vision of Effective Programming*

All of the meetings, site visits and consultations conducted as part of this appraisal mission provided important information and analysis related to the final design and start-up strategy for this pilot initiative. Key learnings from this mission can be divided into two broad categories: (i) advice re the design and delivery of effective programming for unattached young men (ii) input re the selection of sites/ local partners for this project.

(i) Advice Re the Design and Delivery of Effective Programming for Unattached Young Men:

As part of the discussion with all key stakeholders met during this appraisal mission, individuals and groups were asked to articulate what they believed would be the 5 key factors for success in the design and delivery of the planned basic education and livelihood programming to be piloted via this EFA Youth Challenge Grant project. While responses varied in terms of language and emphasis, a clear trend emerged in the key factors identified.

- The foundation for successful adult-youth partnerships in basic education and livelihood programs is a **respectful and supportive attitude** on the part of the adults involved (teachers, social workers, vocational trainers and administrators alike) to the young people participating. This requires the hiring of staff who want to work with youth, who are willing to appreciate and engage with youth culture, and who appreciate the diverse assets⁵ and

⁵ See the work of the Search Institute in the area of an Asset Approach to youth development

strengths youth bring to the learning partnership. As respondents observed: “youth need to feel big and important”, “youth need to be loved and accepted for who they are”, and “it takes a major attitude change for teachers and other adult professionals to be successful with unattached youth”. There was also a realization that work with unattached youth is very demanding and needs to be paced (including days on site each week without youth present for planning/de-briefing/ skills development and self care) so as to prevent staff burn out.

- Successful programs for unattached youth will need to be developed with their input and adults will need to **share program leadership** wherever possible with young participants. Consistent feedback was that the project would need to attract young people by offering programming that youth perceived to be relevant and interesting. This might imply using sport, cultural and/or practical livelihood development activities to engage young people and begin to build positive relationships -- and then gradually blend basic education, counseling and life skill development components into the budding new adult youth partnerships.

- There will need to be a central orientation in this new project to **preparation for employment / self employment** (as compared to UAP's emphasis on re-entry into formal education), and progress will need to be tracked re the development of a range of sustainable livelihood assets, capabilities and activities.⁶ It was emphasized that this livelihood development programming needs to be hands on, practical and comprehensive (for example inking youth to micro-finance services and/or apprenticeships/placements as part of vocational skills training, versus providing only workshop style experiences). It was also generally agreed that basic education programming will still need to be a central offering, though presented in a more low key way and drawing on young peoples' strengths vs. emphasizing their gaps in literacy / numeracy fundamentals.⁷

- Successful programs for unattached youth will recognize their potential to act as **positive agents of change** in the community and will seek ways to support them to address community needs (and provide visibility/ recognition as they do so). There was broad consensus that programming should not further marginalize participating youth (one reason many might not chose to participate), and that where possible more mainstream youth should be integrated into activities so as to build new positive peer communities.

- A successful pilot program will need to develop the capacity of young participants to **build more positive relationships** with a range of community actors (from police officers to faith leaders, to parents and potential employers), and to enhance the capacity of these same adult actors to relate empathetically to the needs and aspirations of unattached youth.

(www.search-institute.org)

⁶ See the concept of Accompanied Youth Livelihood Development (AYLD) in recent ILO publications for a better articulation of the assets, capabilities and activities in question

⁷ See the Youth Cultural Competence model for basic education programming with older youth for an example of effective practice in this domain.

- A successful program for unattached youth will need to understand the **power of media and popular culture** in the socialization of young people, and should consider the integration of a well developed communication strategy as part of its overall programming

(ii) Site Selection:

The initial concept paper for this new EFA project called for the pilot delivery of new services for unattached youth in two sites – with Hanah Town and Spanish Town given as suggested communities. The logic for their selection had to do with the location of upcoming World Bank supported investments in restored public infrastructure, and an overall perception of need.

During this appraisal mission, numerous stakeholders questioned the appropriateness of these sites and suggested some overall guiding principles for the final selection of sites:

- Coordinate with planned MoEYC investments via Operation Phoenix and solicit MoEYC input on communities with high populations of unattached youth
- Look at past and ongoing investments by USAID and other donors, in order to maximize overlap and develop a foundation for sustainable impact .
- Ensure that there exists a number of possible implementing partners in the sites selected, so that programs can be up and running quickly given the relatively short timeline of this pilot project.
- Consider a degree of geographic diversity in the sites selected so that evidence drawn from pilots could inform the scaling up of programming in a range of communities across the island
- Engage unattached youth in the site identification process through some kind of youth mapping exercise or rapid appraisal activity.

F. Recommendations/ Next Steps:

The successful completion of this appraisal mission certainly confirmed the overall wisdom of selecting the USAID J-CAR proposal to the EFA Youth Challenge Grant Award program. Solid cross-sectoral buy-in within the Mission, an extensive experience base in programming for at risk adolescents and youth, and the strong foundation developed via the Uplifting Adolescents Program, all make this a very promising EFA pilot site.

As a result of this mission, 5 key recommendations are in order:

- (i) EDC/EQUIP 3 and USAID J-CAR move ahead with the Associate Award process and begin to prepare the RFA process for the selection of the lead local implementing partner(s).

- (ii) USAID J-CAR continue to collaborate with the MoEYC in the development of this pilot project and in the selection of potential sites.
- (iii) USAID J-CAR strongly consider investing resources in a rapid appraisal activity that will aid in final site selection
- (iv) The capacity building components of this EFA project include resources for inviting participants from outside of the immediate implementing team such that MoEYC personnel and lead staff from UAP partners and other key stakeholders benefit from the learning opportunities of the two planned "laboratory" sites.
- (v) EDC and USAID J-CAR begin to articulate a process for joint selection of local implementing partner(s), and also address the M&E parameters for this shared activity (two items taken off the agenda for this appraisal mission due to timing constraints)

Finally, staff of USAID J-CAR, PACT, MoEYC and UAP implementing partners are all to be most sincerely thanked for their warm hospitality and generous dedication of time to this Appraisal Mission activity. The spirit of shared investment and common commitment that permeated this brief appraisal/engagement activity bode well for the full implementation of this bold new initiative, and the broad range of stakeholders involved in its final stages of planning will surely ensure its eventual success.

G. Critical Assumptions Identified By the Local USAID Mission

In response to the circulation of a draft version of this report, the local SAID Mission team identified the following critical assumptions regarding the success of this initiative:

- Commitment from the targeted youth;
- Social environment in the targeted communities is conducive to the program;
- The role of the Education Development Center (EDC) in directing the program;
- Competence of the selected NGO, training institutions and other implementing partners in designing and delivering the outputs;
- Demand for skills exists in the Jamaican marketplace;
- Private sector involvement in apprenticeship program and recruiting process; and
- Realistic targets for the program.

All of these will need to be carefully tracked throughout the final design and implementation phases of this project for it to achieve its overall objectives.

About EQUIP3 and Contact Information

EQUIP3 / Youth Trust (www.equip123.net) is a USAID-funded Leader with Associates mechanism created to improve the quality of education, learning opportunities, improved livelihoods, and increased civic engagement for youth and young adults. EQUIP3 is pre-competed, allowing for the quick start-up of assessment, design, and implementation of youth-oriented programs. The EQUIP3 consortium is lead by Education Development Center, Inc. and includes 12 international youth development organizations, such as the Academy for Educational Development and International Youth Foundation.

EQUIP3 / Youth Trust Consortium:

Education Development Center, Inc. • Academy for Educational Development • Catholic Relief Services • International Council on National Youth Policy • International Youth Foundation • National Youth Employment Coalition • National Youth Leadership Council • Opportunities Industrialization Centers International • Partners of the Americas • Plan International Childreach • Sesame Workshop • Streetkids International • World Learning

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