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# UNICEF JAMAICA

## *Ending Violence in Jamaica*

A REPORT PREPARED FOR NEXTGEN

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## Situation Overview

In Jamaica, considerable progress has been made to improve the lives and wellbeing of children. However, many children, especially those from the poorest families, are not receiving the basic foundational skills they need to meet minimum learning standards and are subjected to violence, including corporal punishment. Greater efforts are also needed to improve services for the hardest to reach and reduce toxic stress and exposure to violence.

Children in Jamaica encounter violence, not only in schools but also in their homes and communities. Over the past five years, children and adolescents have consistently accounted for approximately one third of all violent injuries reported at hospitals in Jamaica. Statistics produced by the Jamaica Crime Observatory Integrated Crime and Violence Information System in its 2011-2015 Report on Children and Violence attest to the fact that, on an annual basis, children are victims of major crimes including sexual abuse, murder, shootings and robberies. More than twice as many children were victims of sexual assault than adults.

In Jamaica two key program areas - *Life Long Learning* and *Child Safety and Justice* - are helping to break cycles of violence and ensure that children have access protective learning environments. Under these broad program areas, UNICEF is implementing several initiatives to foster safe environments for children and support child-friendly, rights-based schools that promote positive discipline and advance student-centered learning to create a generation of critical, creative and confident thinkers.

## The Impact of Your Support

### Lifelong Learning

Your support for education in Jamaica has enabled UNICEF and its partners to continue activities that are aimed at reaching the poorest and most vulnerable children to achieve more equitable developmental outcomes. Children reached through UNICEF's education program include preschool, primary and secondary school students in Jamaica's public education system, with a specific focus on children from rural communities. During the reporting period (January 2017 – March 2017), children across Jamaica benefited from a range of education activities, including literacy and numeracy support, as well as life skills education that builds their sense of personal worth and agency, and teaches them to interact with others constructively and effectively.

This year, UNICEF prioritized two key programs – EduSport and School Wide Positive Behavior – under the Lifelong Learning framework.

UNICEF's education activities in Jamaica were implemented in close collaboration with the local community, trusted organizations and the Ministry of Education. The key results below show the progress that UNICEF has made over the past year in its *Lifelong Learning* program and the impact of your support on the lives of children, families and communities living in Jamaica.



Author A-Dziko Simba Gegele reads a section from her book 'All Over Again' at a school in Fletcher's Land, Jamaica.  
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## EDUSPORT

EduSport is a novel UNICEF-supported initiative, which has grown to be an important part UNICEF's education programming in Jamaica. EduSport is designed to build key life skills, boost school attendance and aid in classroom learning at public schools in rural communities. Through the program, younger children participate in activities and games that help them with basic numeracy skills. Older students access more structured programs that include football, netball and cricket. The program is being implemented by UNICEF NGO partner, BREDS, and based on the principles of inclusivity and integration. Furthermore, age-appropriate lessons taught on the field are linked to the school curriculum.

### Key program results achieved during the reporting period:

- 11,000 students in 75 schools (preschool and primary) benefited from EduSport across St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. This is an increase of 9,000 children from the first of year of implementation in 2011.
- UNICEF supported the expansion of the program to 15 preschools, reaching children as young as 3 years old.
- 25 coaches were trained in games-based delivery, child protection, human rights and first aid. They also received training to adapt EduSport to meet the needs of children with disabilities.
- An EduSport activities manual was completed to be more inclusive of all children and incorporate other important life skills, including listening skills, discipline, teamwork, confidence building and conflict resolution.
- Strategic outreach to parents encouraged greater community participation in the program. Outreach activities, led by EduSport coaches, were designed to improve parental involvement in their children's schools.
- On June 8, 2017, UNICEF held its third EduSport Summer Festival with the participation of 1,530 students and 149 teachers. The festival allowed children to interact with students from other schools, play games and listen to motivational speeches.
- UNICEF and the NGO, Fight for Peace International (FFPI), worked in six inner city areas on after school violence prevention programs that used martial arts to instill the values of self-control, discipline and conflict resolution. Twelve FFPI coaches were trained in the EduSport methodology and have now incorporated that approach into their work. A pilot program with FFPI will be developed to offer EduSport as an after-school activity.
- As part of the EduSport program, UNICEF worked with partners to upgrade BREDS Sport Park as a model of a family-friendly community space. With the addition of a pool and new playground equipment, the park has become a well-used community space with over 4,450 people using it for annual cricket and football competitions. It also provides a recreational space to teach community members how to swim and encourages children to stay healthy and active.

Now that EduSport has received endorsement from the Ministry of Education and Youth and Information, UNICEF plans scale up the program to reach an additional 10,000 children in at least 50 more schools in Jamaica

## SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Since 2014, UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Information have been piloting a values-based initiative that aims to move schools away from punitive discipline (suspension, expulsion, arrests and exclusion) towards a school culture that rewards positive behavior where trust and connection are built among all members of the school community. Fifty-six schools in Jamaica have participated in the pilot program.

School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) provides schools in Jamaica with framework to reduce fighting and raise grades. The program encourages students to define positive behavior and rewards those who respond in a constructive and positive manner way to problems with their peers and teachers. The program also seeks to shift school culture towards more affirmative modes of education and to embed positive behavior in lessons, school assemblies and extracurricular activities.

First developed in the US in the 1980s, the SWPBIS framework has achieved success internationally with its team-based, whole-school approach. It uses a tiered system to establish or change a school's social culture, relying largely on training

and the sharing of experiences and best practices. SWPBIS is structured for sustainability as it is not reliant on materials but rather on the implementation of evidence-based interventions, which include proactive strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate behaviors that foster positive school environments.

In the first tier, new disciplinary cases are reduced; in the second tier, remaining cases that have not been resolved by the improved school culture are addressed with focused responses; in the third tier, individualized attention is given to the few behavioral cases that have not yet responded to other efforts.



Children learn at a school in Jamaica where UNICEF has been supporting the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information in piloting a values-based initiative that focuses more on modeling and rewarding positive behavior, than on punitive measures.

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#### Key program results:

- Completion of the SWPBIS framework training in all 56 pilot schools.
- Completion of draft of SWPBIS national scale up plan to implement the program in schools throughout Jamaica.
- Alignment of Jamaica's National Health and Family Life Curriculum Self Esteem with the SWPBIS framework to further promote health, well-being, self-esteem, safety and security in Jamaica's public schools.
- Launch and dissemination of National Guidance Counselling Policy to support students' holistic wellbeing and reinforce positive messaging.

To date, over 5,000 educators have been exposed to the methodology and 2,500 have completed SWPBIS training. After nearly four years of implementation, many of the pilot schools are seeing results: less fights, better grades, and improved attendance.

The intended expansion of this program has taken on even greater significance with the 2017 call in Parliament by Prime Minister Andrew Holness to ban corporal punishment in Jamaican schools. In referring to the UNICEF's *A Familiar Face* report,<sup>1</sup> he stated, "I wish to declare that I am totally against corporal punishment. I believe that the time has come for the Parliament to have a debate on this issue and finally declare corporal punishment at an end, both within public institutions and as a means of discipline available to parents."

## Child Safety and Justice

UNICEF's Safety and Justice Program focuses on ending violence in all its forms in every sphere of a child's life. UNICEF works with the government of Jamaica to support implementation of national legislation to prevent, mitigate and address violence and other childhood abuses and to ensure that the justice, education, public health, security consider the protection and safety of children.

<sup>1</sup> [https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EVAC-Booklet-FINAL-10\\_31\\_17-high-res.pdf](https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EVAC-Booklet-FINAL-10_31_17-high-res.pdf)

The program seeks to advance **three key outcomes** to improve child safety and justice in Jamaica:

1. Increased country capacity to **promote and ensure justice** that enables the prevention and treatment of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect
2. Strengthened political commitment to **legislate and budget for strengthening** interventions that prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect
3. Increased rights of rights-holders and duty-bearers to **foster positive practices and norms** to protect children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect

Over the past year, with your support, positive results were achieved for children, including advanced work on strengthening the legislative and policy framework for children and improvements in access and quality of services. The results below highlight the progress that UNICEF has made over the past year in its Child Safety and Justice Program.



Parade Gardens Community Coordinator, Alphonso Spencer practicing boxing drills and life skills with a youth on Fleet Street in downtown Kingston as part of the violence prevention program UNICEF is supporting in partnership with the NGO, Fight for Peace.

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### Key program results:

- UNICEF in partnership with Jamaica's Office of the Children's Advocate (OCA) and Ministry of National Security, developed guidance that will be used to help police officers divert children away from detention and address abuse and violence in their communities.
- A forum was organized with key justice stakeholders, child protection actors and government representatives on children in the justice system and how agencies could cooperate to improve children's rights.
- Capacity building efforts helped strengthen partnerships with government officials and church programs to improve violence prevention programs in western Jamaica.
- UNICEF brought together 51 data analysts and program partners from the government and civil society organizations that routinely collect administrative data to discuss and analyze challenges pertaining to the collection, accessibility and utilization of violence against children data in Jamaica. The meeting facilitated information-sharing and discussion of data challenges in the child protection sector and recommended solutions.
- UNICEF and its partner, Peace Management Initiative, held five four-day workshops with 213 youth (15-24 years) on gang demobilization, life skills and behavioral change. The workshop encouraged them to disengage or refuse membership in gangs. Following the workshop, participants were supported in accessing remedial education, vocational training and psychosocial support.

- UNICEF and its partner, Fight for Peace International, trained 38 coaches, facilitators and community leaders to provide child protection support to children in their communities. The training helped them better recognize and respond to signs of distress among children who have experienced trauma.
- 361 youth from six volatile communities benefited from greater access to development and diversionary interventions, including personal development, meditation and resilience.
- UNICEF implemented various activities with local organizations to make community spaces safer and more child-friendly. Activities included green space renovations, community walks, establishment of parenting groups and a community peace run with over 1,000 young people and their parents.
- UNICEF with its partner, Cricket West Indies, held trainings for over 300 physical education teachers and coaches of contact sports and to prevent and reduce exposure of child athletes to abuse and violence.

## The Way Forward

In the year ahead, UNICEF will continue to expand successful *Lifelong Learning* and *Child Safety and Justice* interventions to schools and communities throughout Jamaica. Future plans for both programs involve continued capacity development and advocacy for scale up by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information.

In the 2018-19 school year, UNICEF will work with partners to expand EduSport to Manchester and schools in Westmoreland. Equipment is being procured to implement this program in select schools and UNICEF is planning training for coaches in the second half of the year. It is expected that EduSport will impact up to 20,000 rural children in at least 50 new primary schools.

UNICEF is also preparing to roll-out the School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program across the entire island. In preparation for this scale-up, UNICEF is developing a communications plan and training modules to present to the government. This will help seamlessly infuse the framework into the existing school systems.

Under Jamaica's *Child Safety and Justice* program, UNICEF is working on establishing Child Protection Protocols and Community Safety Plans that can be integrated into schools and communities island-wide. UNICEF plans to use a new report on Children and Violence to inform advocacy and upcoming workshops with key government stakeholders. At the community level, UNICEF will organize psychosocial training workshops, expand mental health services for children and establish child-friendly spaces where children can access these services. UNICEF will also continue its gang demobilization efforts through awareness campaigns and the provision of life skills training and employment opportunities for vulnerable youth.



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With generous support from donors like you, UNICEF has remained at the forefront of efforts to address the education and protection needs of Jamaica's children. Sustained efforts will ensure that children receive the knowledge and experiences they need to thrive in communities where they are protected from violence, exploitation and abuse.

On behalf of children in Jamaica, thank you for your support.

# Case Study: Moving Students in the Right Direction

Marlon Richards is the Physical Education Teacher at Maxfield Park Primary School, a pilot school that successfully implemented the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) framework.

From when I was young I always wanted to help people to learn. I come from a socio-economic background where crime and violence were around me as a child and at this early stage of life, when you are in this type of environment, there are two ways to get out: you can go the sporting route like Usain Bolt and Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce or you can get out with education. Of course, you can also combine the two – like I did by becoming a physical education teacher!



There are a lot of scholarships that offer sports and education and it is even better for a child when they go hand-in-hand. When I see children go on to represent Jamaica in public sports events, and that has happened with three of my students, then I feel my job is fulfilled. I can look back and know that child was once in my care. That is why I love going to school every day to try to get these children to move in the right direction.

When I was younger, I participated in track and field, but my first love was cricket. The great coach, Maurice Westney, told me that if I had taken shot-put a bit more seriously then I probably would have got a scholarship. But being young and a bit naive, I was trying to play for Jamaica or the West Indies. These are things that I have done in my past that I can use show children a different and positive path.

I have been through a lot myself so I know what can happen if children are not guided, they can be led astray. You do not want that to happen to any child in your care and using your past experience most times it turns out well. I have not had a lot of children under my care get involved in the wrong or illegal activities later stage in life.

The wrong things are what children are mostly hearing highlighted about in our inner-city schools. But, when you highlight the good behaviors, the children can hear that and think, 'I want to do something good.' That is what I like about being a part of the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) framework. That John has helped Marcus with his homework or helped him buy lunch. Children feel a sense of responsibility to be their brother or sister's keeper – they are the ones who write their own destiny at this very young age.

I believe that greatness lies in every child. Every child has the capacity to be great but sometimes we do not have the facilities or the resources to bring out the greatness within them. So when it comes to the end of my career, if I am getting some kind of acknowledgement for having contributed in every small way, then I will feel fulfilled as a teacher.

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