

Cooperative Agreement No.: AID-532-A-13-00003

DGP 4: RFA-OAA-12-000025

Project Title: Enrichment Initiative to Increase Literacy at the Primary School Level

Recipient: Digicel Foundation Limited

PROJECT QUARTERLY REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: April to June 2013

1. INTRODUCTION/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Digicel Foundation (DF) team is on track with the implementation of the project. The first quarter encompassed assembling the project team and laying a firm foundation for the project.

In keeping with the cooperative agreement between DF and USAID, a Programme Manager and two Field Officers were recruited and hired. In addition, the project documents including a three-year Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan, a three-year Marketing and Branding Plan and Year 1 Workplan were approved.

There were regular meetings and dialogue with representatives of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and USAID regarding the execution of the programme.

2. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Output 1 - Enrichment Centres established in schools across the island

Launch of project

The project was officially launched on Friday April 19, 2013. A press release was distributed to all local media along with a captioned photo of USAID – Jamaica Mission Director Denise Herbol, and Digicel Foundation Patron Denis O'Brien and Executive Director Samantha Chantrelle. The signing of the agreement was carried in the Sunday Gleaner, April 21, 2013, along with the photo. This was followed by coverage in the Star on Monday, April 22 and the Western Mirror on Wednesday, April 24, 2013. The launch is also highlighted in Digicel Foundation's first quarterly newsletter to be issued on July 1, 2013.

Call out for applications to schools interested in the EI Centre through various communication channels.

The Call for Applications and all supporting documents was drafted by the DF team and approved by USAID. The DF Public Relations team was engaged to provide a layout and secure placement in the print media of the same. DF presently awaits feedback and approval from the MoE before an advertisement is produced and placed in the media.

Pending MoE approval regarding the Call for Applications, the DF team has dialogued with several persons that could be beneficial in encouraging the promotion of applications for the initiative. These include: Executive Director of the National Parenting Support Commission; Manager – Public Private Partnerships of the National Education Trust; Members of the Executive of the Jamaica Association of Guidance Counsellors in Education; Mayor and Chairman of the St. Catherine Parish Council and the Member of Parliament of the Constituency of West Kingston.

Consult with the MoE to determine schools that are in need of intervention (based on established criteria)

The criteria for schools selection has been established and agreed upon by all partners. The MoE has compiled a list of schools based on the criteria. This was shared with DF on June 24.

Select schools based on established criteria

Preceding the launch of this project, DF had an application form for Enrichment available at its offices and on its website. The DF team reviewed five applications from primary schools along

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with the list of schools provided by the MoE and selected 31 potential recipients to be visited ahead of being awarded an EC/MEC.

Procurement of materials and technological equipment

The DF team has initiated the procurement of materials and technological equipment to be provided to the selected schools. Our internal procurement department has been provided with the list of necessary items and budget for both the ECs and MECs. In keeping with their department guidelines, they have issued a request for tender for the provision of these items.

Design School of the Year competition

Criteria for participation in and judging of the competition have been established. The MoE has begun shortlisting candidates for these awards. This exercise allows the DF and MoE time to assess the current design of the competition and make necessary adjustments for Yr1.

Output 2 - Mobile Enrichment Carts distributed to selected schools across the island

Same as Output 1

Output 3 - Teacher trained in literacy curriculum and use of technology

Develop training modules for upload onto laptops

The team is presently seeking to have the Training Specialist re-record the training modules and activities using Jamaican accents to ease the understanding of literacy videos and audio.

Design Teacher of the Year Competition

Same as Design School of the Year competition above

Output 4 - Improved performance outcomes of direct beneficiaries in ECs and MECs

Establish library corners

Same as Procurement of materials and technological equipment above

Design Student of the Year competition

Same as Design School of the Year competition above

Output 5 - Collaborative responses between home and school for successful academic interventions

Design Parent of the Year competition

Same as Design School of the Year competition above

Output 6 - Effective management of the project

Oversight by DF team

The cooperative agreement underpinning this partnership was signed on April 9, 2013. A Programme Manager, Dane Richardson was recruited and hired effective May 13, 2013. Since that time various activities have been completed under the programme including the:

- Establishment of TORs for remaining positions;
- Recruitment of two field officers;
- Draft and submissions of approved USAID project documents;
- Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the MoE;
- Draft Site Visit Reporting Form

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- Draft School Reporting Form
- Grant agreements to beneficiary schools; and
- Attendance and participation in requisite planning sessions with partners and stakeholders.

A Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, Jo Anderson-Figueroa was engaged effective June 10. Evadne Cowell was engaged effective June 24, 2013. The DF team is currently recruiting persons for the position of part time accountant which is the last position to be filled.

At the request of USAID Jamaica, the DF team took members of the USAID Jamaica and Washington DGP 4 team to visit the Melrose Primary and Junior High School Enrichment Centre on June 28, 2013.

Conduct Monitoring visits by DF team

Various site visits to schools that have previously benefited from Enrichment Carts and Centres were carried out by the DF team. These visits provide the team with useful insights into challenges the schools may be experiencing. They also allow the team to gather information on best practices and how to incorporate these going forward.

Organise steering committee monthly meetings with DF, MOE & USAID representatives

The DF and USAID have been having several formal and informal meetings regarding the project. This has provided much insight and guidance in the project's implementation to date.

The first Project Steering Committee meeting with the MoE is to be held in July 2013.

Testimonials/Success Stories

In an email received June 11, 2013, the DF team received a heart-warming endorsement from the Principal of Parotee Primary School in St. Elizabeth who received a Mobile Enrichment Cart in 2011. The Principal notes that since 2011, the school has seen an increase in literacy rate from 56% to 86% and numeracy rate from 29% to 80% which she attributes largely to the receipt of the Mobile Enrichment Cart and proper assignment of teachers.

3. CHALLENGES/ISSUES THAT HAVE AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION

- The MoE began making preparations for the secondment of an Enrichment Teacher to fill the post of Training Specialist effective June 3, 2013. This unfortunately did not come into fruition.
- A delay has been experienced with regards to approval of the draft Call for Applications shared with the MoE. The Ministry has been very reluctant to give the Foundation permission to use its logo to create an advertisement. We continue dialoguing with them to have these concerns addressed. As such, we have not publicly issued a Call in the newspaper and social media.

4. SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED OR RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES/ISSUES

- Due to continued challenges regarding the secondment of a teacher from the MoE, the post was advertised and interviews conducted. A suitable candidate was selected.
- DF has set a deadline of July 15, 2013 to receive approval from the MoE regarding the Call for Applications. If approval is not received by this date, the DF team will adjust all documents to carry the corporate identities of USAID and DF only and disseminate with only these. Upon making a request, the MoE has shared with us a list of schools that may need interventions in literacy. This is what the Foundation used to shortlist schools.

5. ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

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- Dissemination of Call for applications through various communication channels
- Procurement of materials and technological equipment for ECs and MECs
- Literacy training sessions by MoE to equip teachers
- In-service trainings on use of computer software programmes and training programme on use of equipment by supplier
- Development of training modules for upload onto laptops.
- Establishment of library corners
- Refer underperforming students to EC teacher
- Site visits to selected schools
- Assessment of students and development of individual intervention plan for EC students
- Delivery of programme to diagnosed students in EC by teacher
- Self-evaluation by EC and MEC students
- Preparation of reports for EC and MEC students' progress
- Assessment of students for Term 1
- Assessment of teachers by MoE
- Facilitate site-based in-service as platform to allow participating teachers to share strategies learned and used in the EI
- Distribution of parent partnership forms
- Monthly progress meetings/individual sessions with parents hosted by EI teachers
- Monitoring visits conducted by DF team
- Monthly steering committee meetings with DF, MOE & USAID representatives
- Compilation of USAID monthly financial statements
- Compilation of quarterly USAID technical report

Report Prepared by:  30 JUNE 2013

Report Approved by:  30 June 2013

Date: 30 JUNE 2013