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# USAID/JAMAICA COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION PROJECT - PHASE II (COMET II)

## Monthly Report: March 2015



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# USAID/JAMAICA

# COMET II PROJECT

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAR	Communities Empowered for Disaster & Adaptive Resilience
COL	Culture of Lawfulness
COMET II	Community Empowerment and Transformation Project II
COP	Chief of Party
CRC	Community Resource Centers
CSSB	Community Safety and Security Branch
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTC	Drug Treatment Court
GCC	Global Climate Change
JCF	Jamaica Constabulary Force
MOCA	Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHW	Neighbourhood Watch Program
NIA	National Integrity Action
PAS	Public Affairs Section (of the U.S. Embassy)
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PYC	Police Youth Clubs
RFA	Request for Application
SDC	Social Development Commission
SE	Social Enterprise Model
SRO	School Resource Officer
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency of International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies

## I. PROJECT SUMMARY

During March, a buoyant COMET II grants program awarded a new grant to Northern Caribbean University / Morris Entrepreneurship Centre to offer programs that support the ability of selected at-risk youth to engage in trade and commerce activities that will enhance their employment opportunities while contributing to pertinent safety and security issues. Meanwhile, the Kingston and St. Andrew Football Association grant application submitted in response to request for application (RFA) 5; Sustainable Livelihood Projects for At- Risk Youth in Rockfort, Kingston; is currently in the pre-award phase and will be submitted to USAID for approval upon completion of its environmental mitigation plan. RFAs 8, 9, 10, and 11 have been evaluated by the review evaluation committee and the COMET II grants team is currently conducting pre-award risk assessments with the applying organizations. In March, RFAs 12-23 for sustainable livelihood projects in 12 target communities in Kingston, St. Andrew, and St. Catherine were issued. In addition, RFAs 24-31 for sustainable livelihood projects in 8 communities in St. James and Clarendon were prepared and approved by USAID to be issued next month. COMET II continues planning the non-competitive grant process to award in-kind grants to community development committees (CDCs) for the development of community resource centers (CRCs) and to receive the social enterprise development model for the establishment of sustainable livelihood projects in their respective communities.

COMET II facilitated two grants application writing workshops on March 13 and 23 for sustainable livelihood projects in Kingston and St. Catherine, respectively. Additionally, COMET II led a focus-group of persons living with disabilities from the COMET II communities to identify issues that they face and discuss how activities funded through a COMET II grant could help to alleviate these challenges. The findings from this focus group will be used to develop a scope of work of a future grant RFA.

Highlights of the work been done by current grantees include:

- Netball Foundation of Jamaica (NFJ) conducted its first Youth Leadership Workshop for parish youth executives. The workshop was held at the National Arena Boardroom with two representatives present from each of the parishes of COMET II target communities: Kingston, St. Andrew, St. James, Clarendon, and St. Catherine. This workshop will have an important impact on these youth leaders who will, in turn, organize sporting activities to engage other youth in their respective communities. Additionally, three parish groups are now legally registered entities including the Clarendon Netball Foundation Limited, the St. Catherine Netball Foundation Limited, and the Kingston and St. Andrew Netball Foundation Limited.
- New Horizons Christian Community (NHCOM) conducted a graduation ceremony on March 31 for 47 youth who successfully completed their skills and vocational training. Thirteen youths received certification in Electrical Level 2 and 15 youths received certification in Welding Level 2. These youth have acquired invaluable training credentials that will bolster their marketability for future employment as their certification is recognized by HEART, the national training institute of Jamaica. Additionally, 19 youth graduated from the literacy training course.
- Forward Step Foundation in Gregory Park, St. Catherine began implementation of its sustainable livelihood project for at-risk-youth in the community to develop skills in creative arts (studio engineering and artist development), jewelry craft, carpentry, and life skills.

During March, COMET II continued progress in the CRC development through two parallel sets of activities. First, COMET II hosted four prospective subcontractors for the first cluster of five CRCs built from retrofitted sea containers on site visits in Cambridge, Stony Hill, Rockfort, Gregory Park, and Kitson Town. On March 31, COMET II facilitated a round-table discussion to answer any bidders' questions and to finalize details related to the CRC design. COMET II now awaits their proposals due in mid-April. Second, COMET II conducted site visits in communities which offer already-existing

buildings that could be renovated to serve as CRCs in the communities of Four Paths, Kintyre, and Gordon Town to ascertain the cost implications associated with refurbishing buildings instead of retrofitting sea-containers. The findings of this analysis are presently being processed. COMET II will hire an advanced student in quantity surveying to join the COMET II team as an intern to provide additional support to the CRC developments.

Under Component I, COMET II continued its community based organization (CBO) and CDC governance capacity building thrust. COMET II completed work with CDCs in the five pilot communities of Cambridge, Rockfort, Stony Hill, Gregory Park, and Four Paths thereby allowing them to continue with social entrepreneurship training. Capacity building training sessions and several one-on-one meetings have been conducted by COMET II's governance capacity building subcontractor with: (a) additional CDCs in Trench Town, Harbour Heights, Gordon Town, Linstead, Kitson Town, Belle Plain, and Brixton Hill; and (b) CBOs including Fathers United for Change, RAYDE Youth Club, the Police Youth Club, Forward Step Foundation, and the Neighbourhood Watch. Belle Plain CDC, Fathers United, Stony Hill CDC, Gregory Park CDC, Four Paths CDC, and Gordon Town CDC now constitute the first batch of six legally registered organizations.

Social entrepreneurship sessions continued to gather momentum during March with a roll out of targeted training in the communities of Gregory Park, Rockfort, Linstead, Stony Hill, and Kitson Town CDCs and Forward Step Foundation. By early April, Gregory Park and Kitson Town will complete the social enterprise development model. During the month, COMET II continued its process to identify a subcontractor to implement the social enterprise model with additional CDCs and CBOs. The proposal submission period for the social enterprise work closed on March 27, 2015.

COMET II's focus on global climate change (GCC) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) continued to build on the previously held Communities Empowered for Disaster and Adaptive Resilience (CEDAR) Training of Trainers workshop by conducting follow up activities with the CEDAR working group in the Rae Town. COMET II also continued to engage other stakeholders in DRR and GCC activities including the Social Development Commission (SDC), the Jamaican Red Cross, ODPEM, Parish Council, and Habitat for Humanity, Ministry of Health and a Consultant who is in the process of writing a DRR for GCC project for urban areas.

COMET II also finalized plans for another GCC/DRR activity for youth from the Gordon Town community to be trained in gabion basket construction which will take place on April 21-22. The COMET II GCC Coordinator has also facilitated sessions with members of project communities in Kingston, St. Andrew, and St. Catherine to present and explain the report findings of the community vulnerability assessments conducted during Year One. COMET II presented to each community CD-ROMs and bounded copies to the CDCs, CBOs, and stakeholder representatives.

Under Component Two, three citizen journalism workshops were held in March focusing on "Integrity in the Media with Emphasis on Social Media". The workshop for Kingston, St. Andrew, and St. Catherine was held at the Elletson Road Police Station on March 2; the workshop for Clarendon took place on March 4 at the Four Paths United Church; and on March 9 the Workshop for St. James was conducted at the Western Campus of UTECH. During these workshops, representatives from National Integrity Action (NIA) and the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the US Embassy attended. It was agreed that PAS will collaborate with COMET II on the citizen journalism activities and plans are underway for a workshop(s) for representatives from all 25 COMET II target communities with a speaker from the United States to be brought in under the aegis of the PAS.

Sharlene Hendricks and Kemar Bucknor, two youth who hail from the COMET II communities of Rae Town and Bull Bay and trained as community journalists, began working with COMET II as interns.

They will support the COMET II Component 2 Coordinator and will work across all components to be exposed to the work of the COMET II project.

Under Component 3, Alternative Programs for At-Risk Youth, COMET II developed and submitted for approval a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide technical support to the Drug Treatment Court (DTC). The MOU will be signed by the Ministry of Justice of Jamaica and USAID. COMET II intends to fund a grant to a CBO to support DTC participants in skills and trades development, numeracy and literacy, and identifying life skill opportunities.

Under Component 4, the COMET II Community Policing Coordinator provided support to the Jamaican Constabulary Force's (JCF) Safe Schools Peace Day Concert on March 3. Approximately 1000 youth attended the event and were provided access to COMET II's GCC and Culture of Lawfulness (COL) programming. Over 200 GCC posters were distributed and the public service announcements (PSAs) developed by COMET II in 2014 were aired on a TV screen at the COMET II/JCF booth. Other project brochures, NIA, and JCF Community Based Policing branch (CBP) paraphernalia were also disseminated at the event. COMET II has started initial discussions with the St. Catherine North Police Youth Club Council to provide financial and technical support for a six day youth camp in April.

The Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) Secretariat participated in the first session in a series of Governance strengthening workshops facilitated by COMET II. However, this engagement is now discontinued due to evident tension between the NHW Secretariat and the JCF. The NHW Secretariat and JCF Community Safety and Security Branch (CSSB) were informed of COMET II's decision to suspend further engagement and were advised to inform the project when the situation is remedied to the satisfaction of both parties. COMET II will continue working with the NHW at the local level through the parish bodies.

In March, COMET II engaged a Policy and Planning Specialist as short term technical assistance (STTA) to work with the Major Organized Crime and Anticorruption Agency (MOCA) to develop vetting processes for the newly established agency. However, during the month, COMET II learned that there are still some formative actions that need to be completed by MOCA before the STTA can proceed with providing assistance.

## **2. ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS**

The current COMET II Chief of Party (COP) will depart on May 9, 2015. Tetra Tech DPK has submitted two lists of potential candidates to fill the COP position in January and February and USAID's recommendation is anticipated in the near future.

## **3. THREATS AND MITIGATION**

There are no changes to the Risk Matrix at this time.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Please find attached the March 2015 Monthly Activity Status Report which provides a status update and the percent completed for each COMET II activity. The status reports utilizes "traffic light indicators" to give a visual overview of the current risk associated with the completion of each activity. As noted above, this tracker is based on current expectations of COMET II activities for Year Two and is updated following the revision of the Work Plan and PMP in February.