

# NEW HORIZONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

## SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

January-June 2002

Submitted in Response to:  
Contract No. 532-C-00-98-12345-00

Submitted to:

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## **NHP SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT: January through June 2002**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document describes the activities and accomplishments of New Horizons for Primary Schools (NHP) from January through June 2002. NHP has the objective to enhance the performance of Jamaican primary school students in numeracy and literacy through a holistic, bottoms-up approach to school improvement. The focus of the project is on those children who, because of poverty and other disabling conditions, have had little academic success in school. Increased academic success is to be accomplished through the development of model interventions in 72 schools that, when tested, can be used to improve the performance of low-achieving children throughout Jamaica.

The major activities conducted during the six-month report period included a set that extended across all ten project interventions. These are summarized in reference to the Intermediate Results (IRs) of the USAID/Jamaica Mission Results Framework under each of the NHP interventions:

- **Intervention #1:** Development of Innovative Math and Reading Programs. (IR4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishments:** The site-based technical assistance provided by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) was effective in monitoring and promoting innovative instructional programs in literacy and numeracy in the project schools. An increased number of visits per school, demonstration classes, school- and cluster-based workshops and guidance in the use of supplementary materials and other instructional resources were evident. The formative and process evaluation findings informed the PIU on the level of effectiveness in some areas and served to help improve the quality and desired results of the individual school “Action Plans”.

- **Intervention #2:** Teacher In-service Training. (IR4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishments:** Highlights of the NHP initiatives for training project school classroom teachers comprised the conducting of cluster workshops in specified instructional areas of literacy and numeracy. These initiatives were designed to promote learner-centered instructional strategies as recommended by previous evaluation reports and experiences in the field. A distinguishing

feature of these training sessions were the inclusion of professional development workshops in the areas of Cooperative Learning and Continuous Assessment conducted by international consultants and designed to provide assistance to teachers in the fostering of child-centered learning experiences.

- **Intervention #3:** Governance and Leadership Training. (IR 4.3 *Improved Management of Project Schools*)

**Accomplishments:** J&A assisted the National Council on Education (NCE) by providing technical assistance support in the first stage in the refinement of the 23 modules on Governance and Leadership. The Council continued the further development of the **Operations Manual on Government and Leadership for School Boards**. Three new employees were identified and they are expected to be employed by the NCE in the summer in order to assist with the monitoring and improvement of the school development planning in NHP schools.

- **Intervention #4:** Parent Training. (IR 4.2 *Improved School Attendance*)

**Accomplishments:** Under *Improved School/Parent/Community Involvement*, the institutional contractor collaborated with the National Council on Education by supporting the training of parents and teachers in NHP schools, exposing them to new ideas for the revitalization of the PTA. A study tour exposed selected Parent Training Coordinators and other NHP stakeholders to parenting practices in other cultures. The target of training 360 Parent Training Coordinators in the 72 NHP schools was reached during the period.

- **Intervention #5:** Health and Nutrition. (IR 4.2 *Improved School Attendance*)

**Accomplishment:** A June report to USAID and other stakeholder details the activities, support and results in each of the eight project schools with a program supported by New Horizons. The focus during the period continued to be on mobilizing parents and community involvement and support. In the original eight schools, 533 children were fed and the groundwork was laid for feeding an additional 470 at six new schools. Training concluded in ten of the fourteen schools and results of the weighing study show signs that students participating in the breakfast program are improving in health status. A total of 112 participants have been trained under the mobilization of resource activities conducted within this intervention.

- **Intervention #6:** Supplementary Materials. (IR 4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishments:** All supplementary materials in storage and recently acquired were distributed to the schools. Equipment and an array of resource materials were also provided. Guidance from the PIU on the use of the materials took place on-site in hands-on, demonstration-type settings. Plans for additional training with the audio/video equipment were incorporated into the summer educational technology workshop.

**Intervention #7:** Educational Technology. (IR 4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishments:** The educational technology action plan was put into motion with the identification of five technology-intense schools, the designation of trainees from all 72 schools and identification of the specification of required equipment. Essential hardware and software for summer training was procured in time for the preparation of the July NHP Educational Technology Workshop. The stage has been set for formalizing the desired agreement with the College of Agriculture, Science and Education and the terms of reference for a local Education Technology Coordinator have been written and circulated.

- **Intervention #8:** Training of Resource Teachers. (IR 4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishment:** Approximately 180 NHP resource teachers have been identified and have received training which, in most cases, is substantial in terms of the Revised Primary Curriculum, cooperative learning, writing assessment, performance assessment in mathematics, and an array of other innovative and effective teaching strategies. Many of the resource teachers have demonstrated effectiveness while others will require substantial guidance on-site and further instruction.

- **Intervention #9:** Linking MOEC Data Bases and **Intervention #10:** Linking Project School to EMIS Network. (IR 4.3 *Improved Management of Schools*)

**Accomplishments:** The Jamaica School Administrative System (JSAS) software underwent extensive revision and redesign in keeping with the goal “twice as easy and four times as useful”. Training on basic computer skills was done prior to JSAS training to build confidence among users not computer literate. The current version, 4.3, now provides easy access to current and historical data on students; extensively using analytical graphics and colour-coding to help the teacher manage and use the information. Specifications for additional computer equipment were revised to take advantage of on-going technology evolution. Distribution of 38 computers to 25 schools was finalized by the end of June 2002 as scheduled. Specifications were developed and equipment purchased to support the installation of computer networks in larger schools. As of the end of the period, the EMIS team networked 10 schools. A supply of spare parts was obtained to allow immediate resolution to most of the problem schools experience. Machines are now repaired within a few minutes at the school or in the project office.

## INTRODUCTION

This document describes the activities and accomplishments of the New Horizons for Primary Schools (NHP) Activity during January to June 2002, approximately three and one-half years into the project at the outset of the period and three years in the schools the end of June. NHP has the general objective to enhance the performance of Jamaican primary school students in numeracy and literacy. The focus is on those children who, because of poverty and other disabling conditions, have had little academic success in school. Increased academic success is to be accomplished through the development of model interventions in 72 schools that, when tested, can be used to improve the performance of low-achieving children throughout Jamaica. Following a brief description of the New Horizons Project, the overall expected results of the New Horizons activity are presented. The subsequent section makes up the bulk of the report and consists of a narrative description of the principal activities carried out during the reporting period. The next section discusses the problems encountered in project implementation and steps taken to resolve such problems. Activities to be completed during the upcoming reporting period are briefly described in the final section under "Statement of Work". All sections of the report are organized in terms of the Strategic Objective (SO) and the Intermediate Results (IRs) to which NHP responds. Specific lower level results are discussed in the narratives, as appropriate. The Appendix includes a list of all deliverables and other products submitted to the CTO at USAID from January to June 2002. (Copies of these are available upon request.) A financial status report for the period makes up the second section of the Appendix.

This semi-annual report is tied closely to the USAID/Jamaica Mission Results Framework and is consistent with USAID guidelines.

### **Background**

New Horizons for Primary Schools is approaching the completion of the fourth year of a five-year effort on the part of the Institutional Contractor, Juarez and Associates, Inc. (J&A). The NHP is designed to improve student performance in grades 1-6 through employing a series of interrelated interventions that work in concert to change not only the learning experiences of children in the classroom, but the broader enabling environment of the school and community. NHP is funded by USAID Jamaica and the overall project is a seven-year effort. J&A is conducting its technical assistance effort in collaboration with IDEAS, Ltd.

NHP is working in partnership with the Jamaican Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEYC) and other members of the Jamaican education community to bring about changes in schools and classrooms that result in individual students having greater academic success in primary school. The strategic vision of NHP is to use a holistic, "bottoms-up" approach to equip local

communities, school principals, and teachers to improve local school policies, decision-making, and educational practice in favor of better quality learning for all children.

NHP supports the USAID/Jamaica strategic objective of *Increased literacy and numeracy among targeted Jamaican youth*. The NHP objectives of building capacity to both manage educational reform at the local level and to improve instructional practice and student learning in the classroom directly support several Intermediate Results. These are: IR 4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*; IR 4.2 *Increased School Attendance*; and IR 4.3 *Improved Management of Schools*. The SO is supported through the implementation of ten interrelated interventions: Developing innovative mathematics and literacy programs; providing in-service teacher training in reading and mathematics; providing governance and leadership training for schools, communities and parents; offering parent education and training; selective facilitating of health and nutrition activities; providing supplementary reading and mathematics materials; training teachers in educational technology; training resource teachers; integrating databases; and linking schools with the Jamaican regional and national EMIS system.

### **Expected Results**

New Horizons furthers the Strategic Objective by achieving eleven expected results. These results span the ten interventions and can be summarized as follows:

- Marked improvement in reading and numeracy performance among primary school students
- Innovative curricula and materials, which meet the needs of individual schools
- Classroom and resource teachers trained in the latest instructional approaches for reading and mathematics, educational technology (including computer assisted instruction and educational media resources)
- Modernized school management
- Exposure of teachers, students, and communities to educational technology and information systems
- Breakfast and nutritional education programs instituted in a number of project schools
- Empowerment of school boards and parent/teacher organizations
- Greater professionalism of teachers
- Increased attendance and academic promotion
- Jamaican youth prepared for the technologically oriented marketplace
- Increased community and private sector involvement in support of schools

## Statement of Prior Activities

In the approximate three and one-half years prior to the current reporting period, NHP further supported the preparation and monitoring of more refined, customized School Development Plans in the form of “Action Plans” of higher quality with clearly articulated steps for implementation of school-specific innovative programs in numeracy and literacy. Along with other components of the plans, this augmented the overall effort to effectively implement the revised primary curriculum which was done in previous years in close collaboration with the Core Curriculum Unit, the Professional Development Unit and others within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture. NHP reports from previous periods served to guide the PIU in the design and implementation of teacher training activities to provide effective instruction in numeracy and literacy, initially among the neediest of project schools and on to all 72 of them. Site-based and cluster workshops ranged from selecting literacy activities from the curriculum to match reading skills in comprehension; teaching students to formulate questions, evaluating the difficulties students encounter in reading comprehension, among others. In mathematics, areas reviewed included the teaching of algebra across the grades, the use of calculators across the curriculum, and others. In addition, advances were made in the revision of the NHP plans in the area of educational technology and a breakfast program was initiated in eight project schools and recently expanded to an additional six sites. Administrative computers were successfully delivered to all six Regional Offices as well as the project schools. The PIU professional team also assisted partners from the MOEYC Professional Development Unit in developing and implementing training plans for an additional 33 new resource teachers along with over 150 others who had received more extensive preparation and supervision. Topics for resource teacher training covered the revised curriculum, innovative teaching strategies, cooperative learning, continuous assessment, and others. Support was provided the National Council on Education in contracting consultants to write manuals, developing and implementing training plans for both school/community leaders and parents, and conducting participant training activities. Substantial quantities of supplementary materials and equipment were procured and distributed in previous periods, including considerable donated books appropriate for the Jamaican primary schools. The stage was set for the plans under the Educational Technology Intervention to be put into action. The activities of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) team under the guidance of the Subcontractor, IDEAS, Ltd., provided the required equipment and technical assistance essential to accomplish the intended improved school management in previous periods and completed the re-design for Interventions 9 and 10, re-defining the objectives and actions of the school-based administrative information technology interventions for the remainder of the life of the project. The annual formative evaluation reports were completed by the J&A Formative Evaluation Team on the basis of the **Performance and Monitoring Plan** (May 1999 and revised versions) and these, along with more recently conducted process evaluations, served to inform the NHP of its strengths and areas for improvement.



## PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE REPORT PERIOD, JANUARY -- JUNE 2002

**Strategic Objective:** *Increased literacy and numeracy among targeted Jamaican youth.*

**Develop School Specific Literacy and Numeracy Innovative Programs.** “Child-centered” numeracy and literacy innovative programs and teaching strategies continued to be the focus of the school development efforts of the Project Implementation Unit through the remainder of the 2001-2002 academic year. School Development Plans (SDPs) in the form of “Action Plans” were reviewed and implemented in the NHP schools. These were judged by the NHP team to be more refined, better focused and of higher quality than in previous school years. Experienced project principals, resource teachers and others continued to instruct others in the process of school development planning for improved student achievement in mathematics and reading. Many of the resource materials have been serving as references for other projects and schools. As the school year approached completion, the PIU team encouraged school principals to involve their School Development Teams in the preparation of Action Plans for the next school year, utilizing the results of the Grade Three Diagnostic and other tests to inform them in this process. The integration of technology as a means to further improve instruction was strongly encouraged in view of the audio/video equipment distributed by the project to all schools and the anticipated learning resulting from the NHP Educational Technology Workshop scheduled for July 2002.

**Conduct Site-based Technical Assistance and Report Status.** As noted in the report for the previous six-month period, the annual formative evaluation findings played a significant role in informing the PIU of the needed changes in the site-based technical assistance strategy. In summary, the thrust of the change on the part of the PIU Specialists and Project Director was to perform more demonstrations classes, provide student-centered illustrations on the use of resource materials and equipment, and carry out other direct ways of guiding the resource teachers and classroom teachers in improving the quality of their teaching. These and related technical assistance activities and accomplishments are contained in a PIU-prepared status report entitled **Status Report on the New Horizons for Primary Schools Project Implementation Unit Site-Based Technical Assistance Support Strategy for January through June 2002.** The report provides an account of the frequency and types of technical assistance activities conducted. In summary, for the January through June 2002 period, the project schools were visited a total of 207 times, with a total of 289 visitors, indicating that the vast majority of visits were conducted by one specialist. This was intended to give more frequent coverage to all 72 schools. A total of 840 man-hours were invested in these visits. The main activity during these visits was clinical in nature, with the specialists observing an individual teacher at work, and providing an opportunity for dialogue between the two. The number of classes visited during this period was 434. In addition, a total of 201 demonstration lessons were given. School visits provided opportunities for workshops to be conducted by specialists within the school and “cluster workshops” were incorporated in some of these cases. A total of 71 such workshops were held, reaching a total of 546 teachers and occupying the teachers for a total of 955

teacher hours. For the entire school year; i.e., September 2001 to June 2002, an average of approximately five school visits were made per school and more time was put into school visits than was the case in the previous academic year.

**Implement Revised Primary Curriculum in Collaboration with MOEYC.** This area of activities continued to be a constant in site-based and other approaches to improve numeracy and literacy among the NHP school children and beyond. The PIU specialists and project director continued to reinforce the work done in previous school years through addressing the questions and concerns of classroom teachers and, in an ever-increasing manner, at site-based workshops in collaboration with resource teachers, by conducting demonstration teaching, encouraging inter-classroom observations and site- and cluster-based workshops on the content and strategies of the revised curriculum. Since the Core Curriculum Unit (CCU) is concentrating of late on implementing the curriculum in non-NHP schools such as those under the Jamaica All Age School Project (JAASP) and the Primary Education Support Project (PESP), New Horizons personnel continued to contribute to the successful implementation of this process by providing advice, recommending NHP resource teachers to assist and the like. The NHP Director and the newly assigned Literacy Specialist from the MOEYC participated in the Ministry's Literacy Initiative Committee that shares promising practices and common concerns with Core Curriculum representatives and others.

**Conduct Formative Evaluation Activities.** In May the Formative Evaluation Team, headed by Dr. Ray Chesterfield, conducted evaluation-related activities. The primary purpose of the consultancy was to prepare the previously-trained local educators to once again carry out systematic data collection for the annual formative evaluation of the project. The team conducted an evaluation methodology workshop in order to respond to the capacity building interests of the Ministry of Education. As follow up to two previous workshops, the latest one was conducted in order to prepare the local evaluation team for the 2002 data collection activities. Data collection instruments were also refined during this activity. The two weeks following the review workshop, the local team, headed by the NHP Evaluation Specialist, collected data from a sample of NHP primary schools. These data will be used to inform the project of progress in implementing program activities and the findings of this evaluation will be used to measure project results. The local Evaluation Specialist also carried out process evaluation activities and reporting in order to provide feedback on site-based activities conducted throughout the six-month period. The specialist completed process evaluation reports in the area of teacher quality. These are cited in the next Intermediate Result section. The NHP partners also collaborated with the "external evaluation" team by providing it with a variety of information, including data on the schools. The collection of the Grade 3 Diagnostic Test data was initiated near the end of the report period. These data and those of the Grade Six Achievement Test will facilitate the completion of the annual formative evaluation exercise which requires that they be integrated into the findings from the fieldwork. A comprehensive trip report was submitted to the Project Director and USAID by the team of International Consultants.

#### **Intermediate Result 4.1: *Improved Teacher Quality***

**Support the Training of Resource Teachers in Performance Assessment.** Five cluster workshops in the areas of writing assessment and mathematics performance assessment were conducted in February 2002 by the NHP Assessment Specialist, Dr. Anthony Nitko, in order to provide practical knowledge and the foundation that the resource teachers will use to develop continuous classroom assessment procedures for evaluating students in literacy and mathematics. The activity covered the expected outcomes: (1) to acquire basic knowledge of the principles of classroom assessment that focus on formative assessment; (2) to practice applying the six traits scoring rubric and to practice applying mathematics performance assessments and their corresponding scoring rubrics; (3) to perform satisfactorily on practice exercises set during the workshop; and (4) to learn the knowledge and strategies needed to train teacher colleagues in ones own school on the content learned in the workshop. There were 171 resource teachers who attended some of or the entire workshop, with 24 to 42 attending at each of the five sites. Substantial resource material was provided each participant, including a **Plan for the Resource Teachers to Follow Up the Writing Assessment and Mathematics Performance Assessment Workshops.** Each of the project schools also received a copy of Dr. Nitko's last edition of **Assessing Student Learning.** PIU Specialists and the Project Director, who were in attendance at one or more of the two-day workshops, provided follow-up assistance and monitoring of the skills learned by the resource teachers. A detailed trip report was submitted by the consultant soon after completion of his work in the field.

**Support the Training of Resource Teachers in Cooperative Learning.** Similarly to the workshops in the area of assessment, a series of school visits and cluster workshops were conducted by Cooperative Learning Specialists, Dr. George Smith and Mrs. Barbara Frandsen, in March and April 2002 as a follow-up to earlier training in order to reinforce the resource teachers' use of this child-centered strategy in their classrooms and in those of their peers by providing a forum to ask questions, obtain feedback and receive additional training. The approach supported the lesson planning and instruction advocated by the project and the prescribed array of strategies and resources recommended under the Revised Primary Curriculum. As a result of the training, participants were able to: (1) identify teaching-learning challenges and problems relevant to using cooperative learning as an instructional strategy in the teaching of literacy and numeracy; (2) address some of the more pressing challenges and problems in managing cooperative learning; (3) strengthen their skills in developing cooperative lessons; (4) assess their own levels of involvement and experience in preparation to train other teachers in cooperative learning; (5) receive additional materials and plans needed to train other teachers; and (6) identify the appropriate content, processes, and strategies for a Trainer's Manual in cooperative learning, which will become the primary guide for resource teachers in training other teachers in cooperative learning. Among the extensive materials received by the resource teachers was the Frandsen publication entitled **Managing Cooperative Classrooms** and reference booklets such as **Cooperative Learning Level Two: A Refresher and Extension Course.** Participation and attendance at the workshops were high and the evaluation results were very favorable as evident from all reports, including the consultants' Trip Report which was submitted soon after the workshop. A follow-up five-day "Trainers' Workshop" for approximately 40 of the most select NHP resource teachers is

programmed for August. This is to be preceded by a two-day workshop for approximately 12 experienced MOEYC resource teachers who will serve as “Facilitators” under the guidance of the aforementioned Cooperative Learning Specialists. As with the writing and math assessment workshops, the PIU conducted site-based monitoring and technical assistance were required.

**Promote Ability of Teachers to Use Innovative Approaches and Supplementary Materials.** As was noted in the previous report period, the **Year 2001 Project Performance Report** informed the PIU of the accomplishment of having a noteworthy increase of reading and mathematics materials in the schools while providing evidence of a lack of utilization during instruction. This and other indicators led the PIU to provide more intensive guidance in the effective utilization of instructional resources and recently acquired audio-visual equipment for the remainder of the school year as well. The local NHP Evaluation Specialist provided support in furthering this process by conducting process evaluation activities in select schools and distributing forms for the gathering of related information by the PIU Specialist and Director during their visits to classrooms. These activities enhanced the teachers’ ability to use the materials and guided them in the process of more child-centered approaches to teaching and learning. It is anticipated that the results of these efforts and those site-based technical assistance strategies cited under the Strategic Objective section above will be revealed in the findings of the forthcoming **Year 2002 Project Performance Report** which is expected early in the next report period, July to December 2002.

**Procure and Distribute Equipment and Materials.** All remaining supplementary materials and equipment referred to in the previous semi-annual report and additional items were either procured or distributed by the contractor prior to June 2002. As noted these materials and the equipment were identified in close collaboration with NHP partners in the Core Curriculum Unit, project schools, PIU, publishers, and the Home Office staff. Most of the items dealt with by the PIU during the report period were of an instructional resource nature and included, among others, at least one of the following for each of the 72 project schools: flannel boards, overhead projectors, projector screens, 32 inch televisions with PC connections, VCRs, mobile tables and easels with stands. A total of 30,000 mathematics graph books were also distributed in January 2002 to the schools in proportion to the number of students enrolled. As with the aforementioned materials and equipment, the preparation of guidelines and the implementation of activities designed to instruct principals and teachers in the proper maintenance and utilization of most of these items was set in motion by the PIU members as is described elsewhere in this report. Additional procurements were completed under the Educational Technology Intervention and the EMIS activity which are detailed immediately below and under Intermediate Result 4.3, respectively.

**Identify Sites, Trainees, and Equipment Specifications for Implementation of Educational Technology Intervention.** Following the finalization of the **Educational Technology Action Plan: December 2001** by the Educational Technology Specialist, Dr. Brian Reilly, specific next steps such as the possible hiring of an educational technology coordinator and the site of the proposed project

technology resource centre were agreed upon by the Ministry and NHP. Deliberations resulted in a “Multi-media Resource Centre (MMRC) Site Proposal” which was prepared and forwarded to the Chief Education Officer by the Director of Projects. Within this document, the following main recommendations were set forth: (1) the NHP should enter into an agreement with the College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE) and the Ministry to establish those conditions for the successful establishment and operations of the proposed MMRC; (2) the MOEYC should designate the most appropriate Region II NHP school as a “satellite school” to serve as an extension of the MMRC for initial testing of technology, both hardware and software; (3) the MOEYC should hire a full-time local educational technology person or a regular Ministry employee to serve as a support person at the site of the MMRC. In anticipation of an active 2002-2003 school year in which technology is to be utilized to further improve student achievement in numeracy and literacy, Dr. Reilly, in collaboration with others, formulated plans for summer training in the effective utilization of the audio-visual equipment previously distributed to the project schools as well as training for the use of computer and other electronic equipment. The training plans were also shared with the PIU and PDU as well as the Media Services Unit in order to identify the main sites, the persons to be trained, and to agree upon specifications for the additional equipment, including hardware and software. The five main school sites which were decided on for the intensive training were Allman Town Primary, John Mills Primary and Junior High, Anchovy Primary, Manchioneal All Age, and Windsor Castle All Age. The list of trainees was completed in June in preparation for the July educational technology workshop and included three representatives from each of these five schools (the principal or designated substitute, a resource teacher versed or interested in technology, and classroom teacher or resource teacher who has demonstrated strength as a trainer of teachers). The list also contained one representative from each of the remaining 67 NHP schools. These individuals are to be the prime resource persons for facilitating the integration of technology into the curriculum and teaching methods at each of these project schools. A comprehensive, detailed listing of the specifications of the equipment for implementation of this intervention was prepared by the Educational Technology Specialist mid-way through the report period. Concurrence was received by the Ministry on the procurement of this equipment and a significant portion, including camcorders and digital cameras along with eMACs, was delivered as planned in June in time for utilization at the July workshop designed to address the needs of the two distinct groups of trainees. With these actions, what remains as an essential ingredient under this activity is the Ministry to follow up on the Memorandum of Understanding with CASE, the hiring of the local Education Technology Coordinator, and the provision of support required as a partner in the agreement with CASE and NHP.

**Conduct Process Evaluation on the Quality of Teaching.** Follow-up to the findings of the year 2001 formative evaluation report on the quality of teaching, the local NHP evaluator conducted process evaluation to determine the quality of teaching in grades one, three, and six in a sample of eight project schools in regions one and six. Content analysis of teachers’ lesson plans, observations of classroom environments and teaching, and informal interview techniques provided data to inform the NHP team on aspects of teachers’ teaching that appeared effective and those which needed improvement to meet the criteria for a learner-centered curriculum that promotes literacy and numeracy. The specialist prepared two reports: (1) **Report on Teaching Quality in New Horizons Primary Schools** and (2) **Summative Process Evaluation Report On Teaching Quality In New Horizons Primary Schools For**

**The Academic Year 2001-2002.** Jointly with the “External Evaluation” and the 2002 project formative evaluation, these process evaluation findings will further guide the NHP in the preparation of the annual workplan and the implementation of its technical assistance in the area of quality of teaching.

#### **Intermediate Result 4.2: *Increased School Attendance***

**Implement Breakfast Program and Report Progress.** During the period January to June 2002, the focus continued to be on mobilizing parent and community involvement and support for the breakfast/health program. Activities continued in the eight schools to feed 533 children and to lay the groundwork for feeding an additional 470 students in Grades 1-6 at the six new schools starting September, 2002. To this end, breakfast menus were calculated for these latter schools and monitoring forms prepared for inventory control and quality standards. Teachers in the schools maintained attendance records and data on school performance were reviewed and reported relative to students receiving breakfast or not. Attendance among the breakfast students has increased from 68% (2000-01) to 78% (2001-02). Performance of the breakfast students was comparable to the non-breakfast students even though the students selected for the subsidy were likely to be the disadvantaged and lower performing ones. Students were also weighed and measured in order to better target the students most in need. Results of this weighing showed that children who had been participating in the school breakfast improved in health status as there were less underweight children among them (2.7%) compared to previously (7.5%) and compared to the rest of the students in the schools who did not receive a subsidized breakfast. There were four times more underweight students among the students not receiving the subsidized breakfast than among those on the breakfast program. This training has now concluded in ten of the fourteen schools including one that was previously conducted by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) and commenced in the remaining four schools. So far, one hundred and twelve (112) participants in this training will receive certificates of either completion or participation. The training equipped parents and teachers to work together in planning and implementing fundraising events to generate funds to offset some of the costs of the breakfast program. Details on the accomplishments and activities under this intervention during the period are included in the **Progress Report on Health and Nutrition Intervention.**

**Plan and Implement NHP Incentive Criteria to School-Based Improvement Initiatives.** As follow up to the earlier project support to the identification and implementation of incentive strategies at diverse levels in the school system, the NHP planned and implemented incentive criteria to school-based improvement. This was reported in a PIU document entitled: **Implementation of NHP Incentive Criteria to School-Based Improvement Initiatives.** The implementation of the incentive strategies was guided by the criteria outlined in the Administrative Criteria Framework for Incentive Awards designed by the NHP partners. Applying these criteria, incentives awards are to be made along the following lines: (a) 17 principals for role performance as instructional leaders; (b) 12 classroom teachers for quality teaching; (c) 40 resource teachers to attend professional development workshops to be conducted by

international consultants; and (d) 10 “School of the Year” awards. An encouraging recommendation emerging from this NHP incentive award initiative for the period is that the ultimate goal of such an educational practice is to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Further, such educational practices will derive the benefits of sustainment through a classroom school-based “bottoms-up” approach.

**Collaborate with NCE Parental Training Activities and Improved Effectiveness of School Boards.** Under *Improved School/Parent/Community Involvement* the institutional contractor collaborated with the National Council on Education (NCE) by supporting the training of parents and teachers in NHP schools, exposing them to new ideas for the revitalization of the PTA. The Council provided guest lectures on various aspects of parenting and the establishment of Study Circles to Parent Teachers’ Associations in NHP school/communities. A study tour in June exposed selected Parent Training Coordinators and other NHP stakeholders to parenting practices in other cultures by means of a trip to San Antonio, Texas and attendance at the 106<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the PTA. The target of training 360 Parent Training Coordinators in the 72 NHP schools was reached during the period.

### **Intermediate Result 4.3: *Improved Management of Schools***

**Develop Final Version of the Jamaica School Administrative System Software.** In June the “Final Version” of the Jamaica School Administrative System (JSAS) – Version 4.3 software was produced along with the draft of the training materials and statement of the training strategy to be used in cascading the project school management system to additional primary schools. A description of the modifications was also incorporated into the document submitted to USAID at that time. It is entitled: Jamaica School Administrative System Version 4.3 Modification Notes. During the period, the JSAS software was extensively revised and greatly improved in terms of the end-user interface, enhancing both ease-of-use and data integrity. The system was also refocused on students, both individually and as a group, on a special page for use by teachers. This page provides easy access to current and historical data for students in the current class, including attendance, grades, assessment scores and student contact information. Extensive use of analytic graphics and color-coding help the teacher manage and use the information. Printed reports also augment the usefulness of the system, responding to reporting requirements of the Ministry. The training strategy for expansion consists of promoting knowledge of the benefits of the JSAS system and involvement of Regional, Territorial and other Education Officers, who will actively participate in selecting up to 200 additional schools to receive the JSAS system software and training. Training sessions with hands-on practice will be scheduled during Term One of the new school year in each of the regions, where installable CDs and user manuals will be distributed. Based on the current 4.3 version, the user manuals will be finalized during the first month of the academic year with the latest screen

illustrations. Testing and packaging of the latest version was completed and it has already been distributed to fifty (50) schools, including training of appropriate school personnel.

**Procure Additional Administrative Computers, Networking Equipment and Spare Parts.** At the beginning of this period, over 50 % of the schools reported to be experiencing hardware problems of one sort or another. The major problem seemed to be with the CD ROM drives malfunctioning, which also hampered the team's effort in installing the newest version of the JSAS software in some schools. Subsequently, immediate action steps were taken by the EMIS team and NHP staff to identify a reliable local vendor, which resulted in the procurement of spare parts and networking equipment. As follow up to his February 2002 in-country consultancy, the EMIS Specialist, Mr. Bruce Newman, produced a list of recommended specifications for additional computers and equipment to complement and upgrade hardware at various schools, especially the medium to large ones. The specifications for additional computers equipment were revised to take advantage of on-going technology evolution. The following additional computers and equipment were purchased and delivered to the NHP office in June 2002: (a) Fifty-three (53) Central Processing Units (CPUs/computers) with CD-RW drives; (b) Fifty-three (53) 17-inch Monitors; (c) Fifty-three (53) Mice and Keyboards; and (d) Fifty-five (55) UPS's (power supply/surge protectors). As of June 2002, the local team of EMIS Technician/Trainers distributed, as planned, thirty-eight (38) computers to twenty-five (25) schools for the purpose of improving the teacher/computer ratio in the larger schools. As follow-up to this delivery, the EMIS team developed a networking plan for these schools that is to be completed prior to the beginning of the coming school year in the fall of 2002. The EMIS team now has a supply of spare parts, which allows immediate resolution to most of the problems schools experience. The spare parts have also speeded up the process in terms of how long the schools will have to wait for their machines to be repaired. Instead of bringing in a machine to change a faulty CDROM; this is actually done within a few minutes at the school. These accomplishments should assure a highly successful year in terms of improved management of schools through the use of technology for the NHP schools and those schools to be designated by the Ministry for cascading of the JSAS and related training.

**Collaboration with the NCE in the Improvement of School Boards.** J&A assisted in contracting a local consultant for the National Council on Education in order to provide technical assistance in the first stage in the refinement of the 23 modules on Governance and Leadership. In the attempt to produce a more "user-friendly" guide to accompany the Code of Regulations in the management of schools, the Council continued the further development of the **Operations Manual on Government and Leadership for School Boards**. This was in support of the Intermediate Result *Improved Effectiveness of School Boards*. Three new employees are expected to be employed by the NCE in the summer in order to assist with the monitoring and improvement of the school development planning in NHP schools.



## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- **Challenges in implementing the Multi-media Resource Center at CASE.** Although noteworthy progress has been made in implementing the **Educational Technology Action Plan (December 2001)**, key decisions and support are required on the part of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Culture if pivotal components of the plan are to get underway and succeed. Principal among these is the completion of the “Memorandum of Understanding” which has been drafted for some time and is essential if the Ministry and NHP are to enter into agreement with the College of Agriculture, Science and Education in Portland as the site for the pilot Multi-media Resource Center (MMRC). Possibly two schools in the region would serve as “satellite” schools to the Center and, hence, the technology plans for these two sites, in particular, are being delayed. Furthermore, the long-required local assistance in the form of an Educational Technology Coordinator or Specialist to be located at the MMRC is being delayed. The role description for this vital position has been drafted and forwarded to the Office of the Director of Project as well. Without decisiveness on the part of the proper authorities on these matters, the full impact of the funding and effort under this intervention will experience a significant setback.
- **Advertising, hiring and training of PIU Associates.** Similar to the above problem, action is required by the Ministry on the employment of the recommended PIU Associates who would be complementing and extending the site-based technical assistance to be provided by the NHP as of the start of the new school year, 2002-2003. This new aspect of the project will need to be initiated in a collaborative manner and timely fashion. There is a willingness among the project implementers and other stakeholders; however, the “ball is now in the hands” of the MOEYC.
- **Budget constraints.** The contractor, now into its last year of the current agreement with the Agency, has some financial constraints that could be resolved by additional funds at this time or assurances of an extension in the near future. These matters are viewed as problematic and, should there be no early solution, could result in cutbacks in one or more of the line items.
- **Limited responsiveness of some principals to school development planning requirements and others.** As noted in previous reports, some principals have failed to demonstrate the minimal leadership needed to foster the school improvements intended under New Horizons. While the vast majority complete simple reporting tasks such as Action Plans and Termly Reports in a timely manner, others appear to make them far less than a priority. The PIU is addressing these difficulties on a school-by-school basis; however, further attention is required for a significant number of principals. Principal training under the PESP has been encouraged for all NHP school leaders. The long-term solution to the overall problem on lack of responsiveness by some schools and the need for improved planning and leadership will, of course, require a system-wide solution that addresses principal recruitment, professional development and performance assessment of some constructive type.

## STATEMENT OF WORK

As in no other time during the life of the project, the annual workplan requires well-founded specificity in every one of the designated activities. These, each and every one, should be woven together with the holistic, bottoms-up approach and NHP “core principles” as essential guiding lights to the improvement and sustainability of those practices and policies at all levels that are proving effective in supporting each child’s achievement in mathematics and literacy. The work in the period(s) ahead for the contractor will need to be well synchronized with each of the partners (and as noted in the previous section of this semi-annual report, this poses a problem or two). Indeed the challenges are great, but we have met ones of similar magnitudes in the past and, in most instances, overcome them.

With that “preamble” set before us, the NHP team will need, among other actions:

- In Interventions 1 and 2, to make every effort at including the use of appropriate technology in the improvement of numeracy and literacy programs while utilizing it to help enhance the quality of the teachers knowledge and skills through meaningful projects and other applications. The practice of “child-centered” instruction will be essential as well and, it is anticipated, that highly qualified “PIU Associates” will be able to work effectively along side of the Specialists, NHP Resource Teachers and others. Math content and methodology will require further attention as should boys’ education and multi-grade instruction. Effective administrative and instructional practices need to be “packaged” and cascaded effectively according to a well-designed plan.
- In Interventions 3 and 4, bridge the gap in the actions by our partners at the National Council on Education with appropriate activities of the PIU and PDU. This should be most apparent in the vital area of school development planning and the functions of the School Development Teams. The immediate hiring of all three new NCE employees will go a long way to help bridge that gap, but the extending of our roles will be required to some extent by all of us.
- In Intervention 5, the training of the parents and teachers in the mobilization of resources will be put to a solid “test” in the fall. Here, too, collaboration will be essential to success. All 14 breakfast program schools will be up and functioning in September with high-nutrition foods and on their way to sustainability.
- In Intervention 6, there is little money and the project schools will need to rely on other sources of funding.

- In Intervention 7, the stage has been set for a reasonable piloting of technology to enhance the implementation of the revised primary curriculum and for improved numeracy and literacy learning through addressing meaningful, real-world project that require the gathering of information from secondary and primary sources and student analysis and prediction. The Ministry is to enter into an agreement with CASE in order for the intervention to succeed. This will require at least a local educational technology coordinator and perhaps a clerical assistant, and follow up to a well-formulated Memorandum of Understanding among all key parties.
- In Intervention 8, the role of the Training Coordinator should be emphasizing at this stage (if not earlier as well) the compilation of the professional backgrounds and NHP training experiences and on-site successes of each and every resource teacher. Further collaboration with the Core Curriculum Unit and the PIU with the PDU should set the ball rolling in the area of matching the qualifications of NHP resource teachers with the standards for full-fledged “certification” or recognition by the MOEYC as resource teachers for those who meet the standards. The “exposition” on effective practices planned by the coordinator in previous periods should be given serious consideration and joint support if agreed upon for the new school year.
- In Intervention 9 and 10, the re-design plan should be accelerated and one of the first steps will be to involve significant others from the Ministry. Along with the networking in about 25 larger schools and the cascading of the latest version of the JSAS software and training, the EMIS Specialist and Technician/Trainers will have much to do. This may very well include a modified version of the software so as to accommodate “user-friendly” diagnostic and prescriptive decision-making on the part of teachers and principals by the final six months of J&A’s current contract.

In accomplishing the above and much more, the NHP will have to rely on the T.E.A.M. because “Together Each Achieves More.”

## **APPENDIX**

- **Reference List: Products/Deliverables**
  
- **Semi-Annual Financial Status Report**

**Reference List: Products/Deliverables (Cited in the Performance Charts Section)**

- 1. Status Report on the New Horizons for Primary Schools Project Implementation Unit (PIU) Site-Based Technical Support Strategy**
- 2. Jamaica School Administrative System Version 4.3 Modification Notes**
- 3. Progress Report on Health and Nutrition Intervention**
- 4. Evaluation Report on the Quality of Teaching in New Horizons Primary Schools**
- 5. Implementation of NHP Incentive Criteria to School-Based Improvement Initiatives**
- 6. Managing Cooperative Classrooms by Barbara Frandsen**
- 7. Trip Report: February 18-March 2, 2002, Prepared by Bruce Newman**
- 8. Trip Report: May 27-June 4, 2002, Prepared by Bruce Newman**
- 9. Trip Report: February 5-20, 2002, Prepared by Anthony Nitko**
- 10. Educational Assessment of Studies Textbook (Third Edition) by Anthony Nitko**
- 11. Trip Report: April 1-11, 2002, Prepared by George Smith**