NEW HORIZONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

July – December 2002

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

Submitted to:

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NHP SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT: July through December 2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document describes the activities and accomplishments of New Horizons for Primary Schools (NHP) from July through December 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 Project Implementation Unit (PIU) worked with various NHP stakeholders to develop an Annual Workplan based on the Life of Project Plan (LOP) and on results from recent process and formative evaluations. The PIU was effective in monitoring and promoting innovative instructional programs in literacy and numeracy in the project schools. Furthermore, the process evaluation findings informed the PIU on the level of effectiveness in some areas and served to improve school development planning in numeracy and literacy, including the identification of well-defined strategies and approaches for the effective implementation and monitoring of the annual Action Plans. Over 170 site visits were conducted by the PIU in the equivalent of approximately twelve weeks of instruction.

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

  Accomplishments: In addition to the continued site-based technical support provided by the PIU, Dr. Brian Reilly, Educational Technology Specialist, and Dr. John McNeil, Curriculum Specialist, conducted two three-day and one overlapping six-day Educational Technology Workshops. These training activities were designed to address the audio/visual and basic computer interests and needs of the project schools. The workshop was determined to be highly successful as per evaluative feedback. The

PIU also met with Dr. McNeil in a series of discussions that were intended to enhance the team's understanding of this means of using technology, setting standards for improved instruction, and other elements to further improve instruction and learning in the schools. The NHP consulted on site with the 72 school principals on a variety of instructional issues, planning, staff changes, use of human and material resources associated with the project, such as educational technology equipment, exemplary materials, and the professional development and responsibilities of the approximate 180 resource teachers. Staff development workshops were also conducted by the PIU during this period as well as various training sessions at schools with Math and Literacy Resource Teachers. Another highlight of this period was the awarding of eight (8) NHP schools in recognition for exemplary performance relating to the implementation of NHP innovative instructional practices, which were acknowledge at the NCE School Management Award function. Additional schools were also recognized for performance on the Grade Six Achievement Test and a select number (33) of Resource Teachers and ten (10) Facilitators were acknowledged for the completion of training to prepare them to be able to conduct Cooperative Learning workshops. This was done in collaboration with the Professional Development Unit and the technical assistance of the principal NHP Cooperative Learning Specialist.

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

Accomplishments: J&A assisted the National Council on Education (NCE) with the finalization of the procurement of services for the Governance and Leadership Coordinator and Officers and orientation was conducted for these new personnel. The NCE/NHP Project Implementation Officer reported the following major activities: 1) Completed examination of the school development plans; 2) Implemented site visits in 60 NHP schools re: progress of School Development Planning; 3) Reviewed and finalized the Manual on Governance and Leadership Training for School Boards and Principals. In collaboration with the NCE, PIU also designed and conducted an NHP Principals' Workshop in October for the purpose of sharing effective exemplary administrative practices of principals as instructional leaders. Evaluation reports and follow-up activities were completed thereafter for furthering the improvement of school management.

- **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. Additionally, a Parent Conference was conducted in November involving over 350 participants, which included parents, teachers, principals, Guidance Counselors, Regional Directors, Education Officers, as well as staff from the PIU, MOEYC and NCE. It is important to acknowledge that two parents were awarded the Outstanding Parent Award by the Coalition for Better Parenting in November.

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

  Accomplishment: A December report to USAID and other stakeholder details the support and results of activities in each of the fourteen (14) project schools with a breakfast program supported by New Horizons. The focus during the period continued to be on mobilizing parents and community involvement and support. The NHP Nutrition Specialist completed the gathering of information for the nutrition audit in schools (final in the original eight schools and baseline in six schools new to the program during the report period). Monitoring data was also collated, analyzed and compiled in a report. Preparation of training materials began for teacher cluster training slated for January 2003. The Community Development Specialist continued to work with the parent committees in developing their program for community mobilization at select Breakfast program schools.

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

  Accomplishments: All supplementary materials in storage and recently acquired have been distributed to the schools. Emphasis was placed on grade 2-4 materials with regard to at-risk students in this level. As projected for the period, no new activity was anticipated in this area due to the timing and up-coming completion of J&A's current contract. Training with the audio/visual equipment was incorporated into the summer educational technology workshop. A substantial donation of instructional resources from Food for the Poor was received and distributed to the 72 project schools.

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

  Accomplishments: Two international consultants, in collaboration with the PIU, Primary Education Support Project, Media Services Unit of the MOEYC, PDU and others conducted a highly successful six-day residential workshop for teams of participants from five technology intensive NHP schools and the College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE). Twp three-day residential workshops were conducted over the same time span in the summer of 2002. As a result of this training, participants were able to incorporate and use technology in a lesson, set up and maintain A/V equipment, use other equipment and make a presentation as a member of a site-based team. More extensive training and planning was conducted with the technology intensive institutions. Analysis of the resources of the select schools and CASE was conducted and concurrence was received by the Ministry on the list of appropriate equipment required to implement the individual plans of each of the five schools. Emphasis was given to the incorporation of technology into the school development plans of all 72 project schools. Advice was provided by the Institutional Contractor to the MOEYC regarding collaboration with CASE and a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions was completed and signed during the performance period. Related reports on these activities were completed.

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

  Accomplishment: Under the coordination of the PDU, five two-day cluster workshops were conducted in November and December 2002 by the Resource Teachers and Facilitators who were prepared in the summer as trainers in the area of Cooperative Learning. The summer training was done by the International Consultant in Cooperative Learning contracted by J&A. This approach has assured the sustainability of the training element in this area within the MOEYC. The Training Coordinator collaborated with the PIU and Educational Technology Specialist in conducting the July NHP Technology Workshop for project schools.

- **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 Version 5.0 was completed during the period and it will be used in the proposed cascading to an estimated 200 non-NHP schools. To facilitate the training and implementation under the cascading plan, the J&A EMIS Technician/Trainers Team under the direction of the Subcontractor, IDEAS, Ltd. developed both an Installation Manual and a Users Guide. Student and staff file data have been completely captured in 80 percent of the New Horizons schools and the JSAS software is being used daily to keep track of attendance. During the period, as planned 25 large and medium schools received additional computers and a total of 140 computers were networked with the software along with the required configurations. The matter of cascading has been deliberated and it has been forwarded to the Office of the Director of Projects for refinement and concurrence within the Ministry. Required reports were completed along with the manual and guide during the performance period.

INTRODUCTION

This document describes the activities and accomplishments of the New Horizons for Primary Schools (NHP) Activity during July through December 2002, approximately four years into the project at the outset of the period and slightly less than three-and-one-half years in the schools by the end of December. 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 July through December 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 four-and-one-half years 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 four-and-one-half years prior to the current reporting period, NHP conducted activities in each of the ten intervention areas which, collectively, contributed to the improvement of mathematics and literacy achievement among the targeted school children. While the full impact of this effort remains to be determined, the results of the "external evaluation" conducted by Aguirre International generally support the success of the project to date. Prior to the period, the work under Interventions # 1, Innovative Programs in Mathematics and Literacy, coupled with the collaboration under Interventions # 3 and # 4 conducted by the NCE, set the stage to further support the preparation and monitoring of more refined, customized School Development Plans in the form of "Action Plans." Evaluations informed the PIU and this led to 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. Learner-centered instructional strategies were intensified and complemented by the inclusion of professional development workshops in the areas of Cooperative Learning and Continuous Assessment. Under Intervention # 5, increased emphasis was placed on broader community-teacher involvement and technical assistance in the mobilization of resources so as to improve the likelihood of sustainability. The PIU worked effectively to implement the revised primary curriculum 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. In addition, advances were made in the revision of the NHP plans in the area of educational technology and the breakfast program was recently expanded to an additional six sites. Administrative computers were successfully delivered to all six Regional Offices as well as the project schools and 55 additional computer suites were recently purchased as replacement units or parts in a few schools, for training purposes, and for the networking completed during the current performance period. The PIU also assisted partners from the Professional Development Unit in developing and implementing training plans for new resource teachers and new principals on an annual basis. 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 activities of the 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. Improvements in data gathering for the annual evaluations have slowly but surely improved on the part of the project with the intentions that these advances through electronic retrieval, for example, of test and attendance data, will favorably impact the permanent system of the MOEYC.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE REPORT PERIOD, JULY TO DECEMBER 2002

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

Conducted Training in Child-centered Strategies to Reinforce Innovative Approaches in Math and Reading. One two-day and one five-day workshop were conducted in collaboration with the PDU. The first was for ten "Facilitators" and the second had 33 out of 40 select Mathematics and Literacy Resource Teachers in attendance in preparation as Cooperative Learning Trainers. These two activities were planned jointly with two contractor-employed International Consultants who prepared comprehensive Trainer's Manual in Cooperative Learning. This product and the cadre of prepared facilitators and trainers assure a higher degree of sustainability of child-centered learning and, in particular, the effective use of cooperative learning in Jamaican classrooms. As reported on below, follow-up activities on site and in cluster workshops in this area were also conducted during the report period.

Develop School Specific Literacy and Numeracy Innovative Programs. The formulation and implementation of improved school-specific literacy and numeracy programs intensified during the performance period due, in large measure, to the increased support and collaboration from the new staff at the National Council on Education. The annual NHP Principals' Workshop focused on this area and a guide was prepared in the form of a "Handbook on School Development Planning". A total of 72 principals and 24 vice principals were trained in this area. The services of four "consultants" were procured to assist the School Development Teams by on-site training as needed in SDP and in the monitoring and assessment of the Action Plans. Special attention was given in the workshops and in the field to the quality and degree of implementation of the SDP in the form of an annual "Action Plan" at each school with particular attention to the math and literacy objectives, activities and other aspects of these two programs for the school year. These and other accomplishments in the area of improved school development planning are documented in greater detail in the December 2002 "Report on the Progress of School Development Planning". In order to assess the principals' role as instructional leaders, a questionnaire was administered to all principals who attended the Principals' workshop in October. This instrument was designed to elicit descriptions of principals' exemplary leadership practices and their perceived outcomes of these practices for the period September 2001-July 2002. The detailed findings of this survey were presented in the "Report on the Annual NHP Principals' Workshop: Effective and Exemplary Administrative Practices of Principals as Instructional Leaders", which was submitted in December 2002, along with other relevant documentation. From the survey, the following eight effective practices emerged: (1) In-service training, (2) Planning, (3) Assessment, (4) Motivation, (5) Supervision, (6) Evaluation, (7) School Climate, and (8) Teaching strategies. Plans have been made to use all of the relevant findings in future training activities and in other settings with NHP principals.

Conduct Site-based Technical Assistance and Report Status. The "external evaluation" conducted by Aguirre International and the preliminary results of the annual formative evaluation findings played a significant role in informing the PIU of the needed changes in the site-based technical assistance strategy. One Aguirre recommendation was to hire a cadre of "PIU Associates" so as to extend the coverage of the technical assistance of the four PIU Specialists each of whom has been assigned 17 to 18 schools and an approximate 200 educators (principals, vice principals, resource teachers and regular classroom teacher combined). The PIU Specialists and Chief of Party assisted in the screening of associate candidates and, during the performance period, only two accepted employment while several were made offers by the MOEYC. Based on the evaluation findings and past site-based experiences, the PIU identified and conducted the following technical assistance to classroom teachers from September to December 2002 which, unfortunately, was limited to a maximum of 12 weeks of instruction due to the weather and national elections. Over 170 school visitations were made through the first week of December 2002. The site-based activities included modeling instructional strategies, use/demonstration of supplementary materials, encouragement and demonstration of the effective use of an array of educational technology, utilization of diagnostic techniques for reading and math, encourage multi-grade teaching techniques as appropriate, and conduct focused clinical supervisory practices.

Implement Revised Primary Curriculum. Measures were taken to orient new teachers and principals to the revised primary curriculum in collaboration with the MOEYC. In most instances this activity was reinforced by the in-school orientation and, as required, workshops conducted by the experienced Math and Literacy Resource Teachers. The exemplary materials distributed during the course of the project continued to be utilized as a resource to reinforce the implementation of the revised curriculum. The lessons learned and the resources have been serving other projects in the Ministry and the Core Curriculum Unit as they plan and implement the related work with other schools across the island.

Conduct Formative Evaluation Activities. In May the Formative Evaluation Team, coordinated by the local Evaluation Specialist, conducted the annual formative evaluation activities. The previously-trained local educators received retooling and once again carried out systematic data collection at the school level. This training and experience further strengthened sustainability of this type of activity through local capacity building which has been a special interest of the Ministry of Education. Following the review workshop, the local team collected data from a 32 % sample of NHP primary schools. These data were used to inform the project of progress in implementing program activities and the findings of this evaluation combined with the integration of Student Assessment Unit Grade Six Achievement Test and Grade Three Diagnostic Test data were 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. Special emphasis during the period was on the implementation of technological approaches to improve instruction in math and reading through child-centered projects. A comprehensive trip report was submitted to the Project Director and USAID by the evaluation team and a final report was made available to stakeholders by the end of October in time for the preparation of the Agency's annual "R2" reporting in November.

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

Support the Training of Resource Teachers in Cooperative Learning. Cooperative Learning Specialists, Dr. George Smith and Mrs. Barbara Frandsen, strengthened the resource teachers' use of this child-centered strategy in their classrooms and the ability of select resource teachers to train others. In collaboration with the PDU and PIU, the specialists conducted one two-day workshop and one five-day workshop in August 2002. The first one prepared Literacy and Mathematics Facilitators as special presenters in the subsequent workshop for 33 select Resource Teachers designated as future trainers in Cooperative Learning. During November and December, five two-day workshops were conducted by the Facilitators and Resource Teachers prepared in the summer. The training targeted the 150 Resource Teachers who were not selected for the advanced summer training conducted by the International Specialists. A comprehensive Cooperative Learning Training Manual was produced for the purpose of these and future training within the project and for use by the Ministry at non-NHP schools as well.

Support the Training in the Application of Technology to Improved Teaching. In addition to the Cooperative Learning technical support provided to improve the quality of teaching during the performance period, Dr. Brian Reilly, Educational Technology Specialist, and Dr. John McNeil, Curriculum Specialist, conducted two three-day and one overlapping six-day Educational Technology Workshops. These training activities were designed to address the audio/visual and basic computer interests and needs of the project schools. The workshop was determined to be highly successful as per evaluative feedback. The PIU also met with Dr. McNeil in a series of discussions that were intended to enhance the team's understanding of this means of using technology, setting standards for improved instruction, and other elements to further improve instruction and learning in the schools. Dr. Brian Reilly, completed an evaluation and status report on the introduction of technology in each of the five technology-intensive project schools. This required an in-country consultancy which included site visits to each of the schools and substantial observation and inquiry. This was followed by an analysis of the interests, needs and resources vis-à-vis project goals and available funds. The technical assistance provided in this area to the five select schools and the deliberations thereafter resulted in the preparation of the document entitled "Report on the Introduction of Technology as an Adjunct to the Primary Curriculum and a Mechanism for Improved Quality of Teaching." The report has already served to inform the NHP partners and guide them in the preparations for the remainder of the current school year and beyond in the area of educational technology. The local Evaluation Specialist also completed a study to determine the degree of effective application of math and literacy concepts to real world situations individually or cooperatively through projects during the span of approximately the first two and one-half months of the new school year. The findings indicate that there is quite a bit to be done toward implementing project-based learning along with technology. The conclusions and recommendations will also guide the contractor in the weeks and months ahead. As a first step, a "Summary Document" intended to inform NHP school principals and other stakeholders and provide them with specific, concrete suggestions has been prepared for distribution. The report will also be helpful in the preparations for the remainder of the project given the significance that technology has been given by the MOEYC and other NHP partners.

Promote Ability of Teachers to Use Innovative Approaches and Supplementary Materials. The activities delineated under site-based accomplishments cited above were conducted to improve the quality of teaching. The expected outcomes include improvements in: teacher's explanation and feedback, use of educational technology, use of cooperative learning techniques, promotion of student journals and portfolios, teacher's ability to use diagnostic techniques and data to inform instruction, and other competencies that contribute to the teacher's ability to be more innovative and use enriched materials. The Year 2002 Project Performance Report informed the PIU of the accomplishment of having a significant increase of reading and mathematics materials in the schools while providing evidence of a lack of utilization during instruction. Although substantial effort had been put to the task of intensifying the effective use of these materials, the PIU emphasized the importance of this type of technical assistance to teachers through demonstrations in their classrooms and by incorporating the more recently acquired audio-visual equipment. Although the report period covers approximately three months of the new school year, these activities are projected to enhance the teachers' ability to use the materials for frequently and effectively.

Procure and Distribute Equipment and Materials. More activity than originally planned for this intervention (# 6) of the project was conducted. A major donation (approximately US $ 2.85 million) of supplementary materials was acquired for the schools from Food for the Poor. These were distributed along with the 72 sets of resource materials procured for grades 2 to 4, supporting the needs of particularly those students considered to be at risk. The equipment cited in the section immediately below was also distributed along with thirty-eight additional "administrative computers" for select schools, most of which were large or medium in enrollments. Due to the timing and up-coming completion of J&A's current contract, limited activity is planned in this area of procurements.

Equip Select NHP Schools for Improved Use of Technology and Plan for Further Related Activities. Equipment procured in the previous performance period for use in the NHP Educational Technology Workshop referred to above was distributed to select technology-intensive schools. These included one Sony Laptop, seven AlphaSmart Keyboards, two Epson Printers, two Digital Cameras and Docks, two Camcorders, two eMac Computers with accessories, and one TV Photo Viewer. An additional set of equipment for these five select schools was elaborated by the Educational Technology Specialist during his November in-country consultancy based on the findings from site visits, analysis of needs and resources, and deliberations with project and Media Services Unit personnel. Concurrence on the recommended procurement was received by the MOEYC in December. This substantial procurement is to provide both hardware and software that will be common to all five schools and instructional technology resources particular to each school based on the individual Action Plan. The five technology-intensive schools are Allman Town Primary, John Mills Primary and Junior High, Anchovy Primary, Manchioneal All Age, and Windsor Castle All Age. The International Consultant also directed attention to the needs of the remaining project schools, particularly those which may have lost their designated Ed tech resource person or not have had one present at the July workshop. A visit to Case was also conducted in relation to the proposed plan for that institution to be the site of the recommended Multi-media Resource Centre (MMRC). Prior to the end of the report period, the Ministry and CASE authorities agreed to and signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" regarding the MMRC. Further needs and

directions for the project were identified and recommendations set forth by the consultant in his follow-up reporting which included ones related to Internet access possibilities and the development of a mobile technology lab. Finally, as a related activity, Allman Town has entered into an informal linkage via Internet with the University of California at Los Angeles' University Elementary School for the purpose of enhancing instruction, especially in literacy through child-centered projects, and to promote exchanges among students of diverse cultural backgrounds through the use of technology.

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

Implement Breakfast Program and Report Progress. During the period, the Community Development Specialist continued to work with the four (4) remaining Breakfast Program schools in planning their participation. This technical assistance was extended through March 2003. Financial support of 100% for the breakfast program commenced in the five of the six additional schools while the original eight (8) schools resumed their breakfast feeding with a cut-back of 50% as intended at the start of the new school year. To date 1677 students have benefited from breakfast under the New Horizon Project. The registration in the original 8 schools is 683 (up from 533 last year) and 465 as the original number registered. Of the 470 students registered from the new schools, 7.5% were found to be underweight, a figure comparable to the 7.3% of the original 8 schools, now reduced to 2.7%. Attendance continues to increase reaching 86% compared to 80% from the comparable period last year and a baseline of 65%. To verify that standards were maintained, a final nutrition audit was conducted while a baseline audit was done for the new schools. Most of the original schools have mastered the skills related to meal service but they are still deficient in the areas of record keeping and reporting. In addition to fundraising events, some schools have started their income generating projects. Of note are a vegetable garden at Springvale, chicken farms at Lowe River and Windsor Forest. Student contributions have also commenced at some schools and an initiative to include past student contributions. Also evident were motivational health education activities including health fairs at two of the schools. The Nutrition Specialist completed a related report in December. It is entitled "Progress Report on the New Horizons for Primary Schools Project Health and Nutrition Intervention".

Implement NHP Incentive Criteria to School-Based Improvement Initiatives. The project followed up on the planned support to the identification and implementation of incentive strategies at diverse levels in the school system. The NHP applied the criteria as proposed in the PIU document entitled: "Implementation of NHP Incentive Criteria to School-Based Improvement Initiatives" which was completed and circulated prior to the current performance period. 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 were made to 21 schools for commendable performance on the GSAT in both mathematics and language arts or one of these two subject matters for both boys and girls. As noted earlier in this report, eight outstanding schools received commendation from the National Council on Education, and 33 resource teachers and 10 facilitators were designated for certificates of accomplishment as a result of the advanced training completed in the area of Cooperative Learning. The ultimate goal of the incentive

practice is to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Further, it is believed by the project implementers that such educational practices will derive the benefits of sustainment through a classroom school-based "bottoms-up" approach.

Collaborate with NCE Parental Training Activities. As in previous performance period, the institutional contractor collaborated with the National Council on Education (NCE) under *Improved School/Parent/Community Involvement*. This encompassed activities in support of the training of parents and teachers in NHP schools, exposing them to new ideas for the revitalization of the PTA. The Council hosted a "Parent Education Conference" for 350 parents of project school, procured the services of consultants to develop the Parent Education Program, and special parent education program entitled "Parents Making a Difference, Understanding and Helping Your Child" whose objectives were facilitated by the production and distribution of training manual and kit for parents. Photo albums and a videotape of the conference were also produced. The NCE procured and disseminated 3000 math and English workbooks to parents so as to encourage them to assist in the education of their children. Each parent received two workbooks in mathematics and one in English through workshops and the Parent Education Conference. Two NHP parents were awarded the Outstanding Parent Awards for Parent Month 2002 in November by the Coalition for Better Parenting. The Council also reported on the study tour conducted near the end of the previous period which exposed selected Parent Training Coordinators and other NHP stakeholders to parenting practices in other cultures. The document is entitled "Report the 106th Annual Parent Teacher Association Convention."

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

Develop Final Version of the Jamaica School Administrative System Software for Cascading. During the period it was deemed necessary to upgrade Version 4.3 of the "Jamaica School Administrative System" (JSAS) software to Version 5.0. The modifications were made based on feedback from the field and incorporated, among other features, a "principal's page" for report purposes, log in capabilities for the classroom teacher, and student assessment scores setup so as to be able to sustain assessment score capabilities even though the Ministry might decide to change the cutoff scores on such tests. These modifications were made by the EMIS Specialist and details are contained in related reports submitted during the period. This version is the one to be used throughout the proposed cascading to non-NHP schools.

Additional Administrative Computers, Networking Equipment and Spare Parts Used to Strengthen Sustainability. As reported on in the previous period, 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, were utilized in the current performance period to address special needs and assure immediate improvements in school management and, in the long run, contribute to the sustainability of the intended outcomes. The equipment utilized during the period included, among others: (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). 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. The systems and configurations were completed during the first three months of the new school year. The EMIS team also addressed repair and maintenance problems encountered in a more dynamic manner utilizing the procured tools and used the supply of spare parts to resolve most of the problems schools experienced. The 25 medium and large schools were completed and a total of 140 computers were networked according to the desired specifications. In December 2002, a "Status Report on the Installation, Configuration, and Networking of the Jamaica School Administrative System Software in Designated Schools" was completed so as to report on this activity during the period. The work cited in this section has not only strengthened the capacity of the NHP schools in the area of management; it has provided a solid experience and basis for the planned cascading and, in time, the sustainability of the system to support improve school management across the island's schools.

Produced a JSAS Manual and User's Guide to Reinforce the System within NHP Schools and Support the Cascading Process. In recognizing that a major ingredient of effective school reform has been the improvement in school management, the project produced customized Jamaica School Administrative System (JSAS) software and it has been made available as a school management information tool available to the NHP schools. In order to enhance the training and implementation with project schools and to gear up for cascading to other schools, J&A, prepared the user-friendly JSAS Version 5.0 Installation and Set-up Manual, which was submitted in December 2002. It was completed in collaboration with the sub-contractor, IDEAS, Ltd. and the local EMIS Technician/Trainers. This manual contains basic instructions and accompanying illustrations on how to use the software. It is designed to assist users who have a range of computing skills, from minimal to more advanced levels. By following the instructions in this manual, the individual will be able to install and set up the JSAS software for use within a particular school. Given the nature of the software and the fact that it can capture extensive evaluative data, the software can also be used for diagnostic purposes. In addition, the final Version 5.0 of the JSAS software will be distributed free-of-charge in that a perpetual usage license is granted to any school or educational institution in Jamaica that seeks to use it. The contractor also prepared a companion guide entitled JSAS Version 5.0 User's Guide. Both documents are to be reproduced and distributed as part of the planned JSAS software training and cascading activity.

Collaboration with the NCE in the Improvement of School Boards. J&A collaborated with the National Council on Education in the procurement of the services of the consultants to develop the Parent Education Program, host the Parent Education Conference for 350 parents of NHP school communities, and develop the aforementioned training manual and kit for parents. Through two stakeholder workshops and consultant input, the NCE also finalized the "Training Manual on Governance and Leadership for School Boards" during the period. These activities were mainly in support of the Intermediate Result *Improved Effectiveness of School Boards.*

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- **Extension related uncertainties.** The contractor, entering its last five months under the current agreement with the Agency at the close of the report period, had to reconsider and refine its budget due to uncertainties as to the availability of additional funds and a possible two-month extension. Doubts surrounding the long-term extension period have contributed to the uncertainties regarding employment throughout the contract period for some J&A employees and their possible continuation through all or part of the envisioned extension. These matters were identified as problematic at the end of the previous period and contributed to some indecision throughout the performance period. Some of the constraints could be resolved by additional funds at this time or assurances of an extension in the near future.

- **Challenges in implementing the Multi-media Resource Center at CASE continued.** The "Memorandum of Understanding" which has been drafted in the previous report period remained unsigned until December 2002. 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). The contractor had to move ahead in July 2002 and invited CASE and two schools from the region were invited to the summer training with uncertainties about the future of the MMRC. This delayed more than just the equipment procurements intended and identified well in advance by the contractor in consultation with others. As noted in the previous report, the long-required local assistance in the form of an Educational Technology Coordinator or Specialist to be located at the MMRC has delayed another six months. The role description for this pivotal position was drafted and forwarded to the Office of the Director of Project long ago and it was refined by the Acting Head of the Media Services Unit, but there were no concrete results whatsoever during the period. It is emphasized once again that without decisiveness on the part of the proper authorities on these matters, the full impact of the funding and effort under the educational technology intervention will continue to experience significant setbacks.

- **Employment of the PIU Associates.** Similar to the above problem, action required by the Ministry to expedite the timely selection, training and employment of a corps of 24 PIU Associates has delayed. Not even the title can be agreed on in that the Training Coordinator and Director of Projects insist on calling them "Associate Resource Teachers" for some unrevealed reason. This, however, is not a major problem for the contractor. What remains a problem are the delays and "eleventh hour" notice on related activities. The recommendation to employ associates to the PIU Specialists 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, has taken far too long to have any substantial impact this year.

- **Limited responsiveness of some principals**. As noted in previous reports, a limited number of principals continue to demonstrate the minimal leadership required for genuine school reform in spite of concerted efforts to correct the problem.

STATEMENT OF WORK

The work ahead for the institutional contractor for the months of February to May 2003 is well defined. In essence, it is to solidify the work underway so as to assure that the lessons learned to date are well identified, fully documented, recorded, shared and used as a substantial contribution to the momentum required for both the completion of New Horizons for the period and, regardless of the results of the "open" competition, the extension period through September 2004. More concretely, J&A must complete the full set of closing-down activities from inventories to the J&A Final Report on New Horizons for Primary Schools, 1998 to 2003.

As for the specific NHP Interventions:

- In Interventions 1 and 2, the individual school Action Plans for each of the schools are to be reviewed by the PIU Specialists and school-specific actions and recommendations are to be completed by the team. In doing so every effort possible is to be made to incorporate the use of appropriate technology in the improvement of numeracy and literacy programs. The practice of "child-centered" instruction will continue to be emphasized as well by the PIU Specialists and any available "Associates". The planned cluster workshops in math and literacy are to be conducted prior to May for all classroom teachers. The Chief of Party has instructed the PIU team to undertake a collaborative evaluation of the project schools on the basis of pre-established criteria and procedures.

- In Interventions 3 and 4, the contractor will continue to provide the technical assistance required by the National Council on Education so as to permit it to accomplish its plans as outlined in the "NHP Partners' Annual Workplan." The will include, among others, the key area of school development planning and the functions of the School Development Teams for which the new NCE employees were hired last performance period.

- In Intervention 5, the training of the parents and teachers in the mobilization of resources will be completed by the end of March. Thirteen of the 14 breakfast program schools will be up and functioning with high-nutrition foods and on their way to sustainability. Teacher training is the only outstanding aspect of the health intervention and this will be addressed by the Nutrition Specialist. Lessons learned indicate that the schools can be equipped through community mobilization training to financially support their own programs. Attention is to be given to the commitment of principals, positive attitude of teachers to parents, adequate PTA structure, and networking abilities among schools and communities. (Efficiency in running the breakfast program depends on paid staff, better targeting of needy students through weighting and measuring, adequate monitoring and tracking of the use of funds and in maintaining standards.) Monitoring of the programs will continue as well.

- In Intervention 6, expenditure for exemplary resource materials will not be incurred during the remainder of the period. (The only procurements that the partners have concurred on for the near future is the educational technology hardware and software cited under accomplishments in Intervention 7.)

- In Intervention 7, while 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 road to genuine success will be relatively long. The contractor will encourage the Ministry to engage in concrete activities to get the MMRC plans formalized, infrastructure in place and staff hired. Equipment and software noted earlier in this report will be procured to the extent to which the budget permits during the remaining few months. Basically, this intervention will receive as much attention as is practical and in relation to the needs of the project schools and available resources—financial, human and others.

- In Intervention 8, the PDU, as an NHP partner, will need to assure that the plans agreed upon at the Annual NHP Partners' Retreat in August and specified in the Annual Workplan are completed under the leadership of the Training Coordinator. The following are to be part of the work to be completed no later that May 2003, with some currently past due because of their importance to the follow-up to training and other activities: Support for the 18 cluster workshops in math and literacy; Coordination of the planning and implementation of two regional expositions on innovative materials and effective practices; Coordination of the induction of the PIU Associates into the project as a service to the PIU in assuring satisfactory initiation of technical assistance activities; Completion of the long-awaited Resource Teacher Database; and Formulation of the criteria for full recognition of NHP resource teachers who meet the MOEYC standards.

- In Intervention 9 and 10, the stage has been set for the Ministry to collaborate with the NHP EMIS Team in cascading the latest version of the JSAS software to non-NHP schools across the island. This should be the primary activity since it will involve extensive training and other preparations in advance of the installation of the software. The draft set of criteria for school selection and the key steps of the plan which were forwarded to the MOEYC require concurrence by the Ministry authorities. The manual and guide referred to above need to be produced in large numbers. Specific plans for maintenance of the equipment, retooling and other measures for sustainability of the JSAS software utilization will need to be refined based on the closing out and projected extension activities. Even closer collaboration with other projects like the Primary Education Support Project and the Planning and Development Unit will be required throughout the period.

A P P E N D I X

- **Reference List: Products/Deliverables**

- **Semi-Annual Financial Status Report**

Reference List: Products/Deliverables

1. **Formative Evaluation Report, 2002**

2. **Handbook on School Development Planning**

3. **Jamaica School Administrative System (Version 5.0) Software Installation and Setup Manual**

4. **Jamaica School Administrative System (Version 5.0) User's Guide**

5. **Juarez and Associates' NHP Annual Workplan, July 2002 through June 2003**

6. **NHP Partners' Annual Workplan, July 2002 through June 2003**

7. **Report on the Annual NHP Principals' Workshop: Effective and Exemplary Administrative Practices of Principals as Instructional Leaders**

8. **Report on the Application of Technology in a Project Approach to Instruction**

9. **Report on the Introduction of Technology as an Adjunct to the Primary Curriculum and a Mechanism for Improved Quality of Teaching**

10. **Report on the Progress of School Development Planning**

11. **Status Report on the Installation, Configuration, and Networking of the JSAS Software in Designated Schools**

12. **Trainer's Manual for Cooperative Learning**

13. **Training Manual on Governance and Leadership Training for School Boards and Principals**