

A GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN THE JAMAICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



DISCLAIMER

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Management Systems International (MSI).

EQUATE: ACHIEVING EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

EQUATE is a three-year contract awarded by the USAID Office of Women in Development to Management Systems International (MSI), who will implement the project in partnership with Michigan State University. This task order contract, under the Gender Matters IQC, assists field missions in strengthening their capacity to institute gender-equitable practices and policies in basic education activities.

The project aims to:

- Develop a conceptual framework for articulating approaches to achieve gender equality in basic education in consultation with Field Missions, USAID/Washington staff, and other stakeholders;
- Provide cost-free technical assistance that is tailored to meet the needs of Field Missions and USAID/Washington staff;
- Develop practical tools and deliver demand-driven training and technical assistance to enhance the ability of operating units to design, implement, monitor and evaluate projects contributing to gender equality in basic education, as a means of improving people's attainment of a basic education, especially girls.

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DISCLAIMER

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the team and do not necessarily reflect the views and or the policies of USAID/Jamaica, the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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This report presents the findings of a gender analysis of the educational achievement of boys and girls in the Jamaican educational system.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CETT	Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ESSJ	Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica
GCE	General Certificate in Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOJ	Government of Jamaica
GSAT	Grade Six Achievement Test
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IR	Intermediate Result
MOEY&C	Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture
MSI	Management Systems International
NAP	National Assessment Program
NGO	Non-governmental organization
HEART/NTA	Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/National Training Agency
PATH	Program for Advancement in Education and Health
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
SCOPE	School Community Outreach Programme for Education
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Scope of Work
TFER	Task Force on Educational Reform
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of West Indies

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Jamaican education system has been the subject of intense national scrutiny and debate as analyses of, and reports on, severe weaknesses in student achievement at primary and secondary levels have made national media headlines in recent months. Many share concerns about the marked underachievement of male students, particularly in literacy at the primary level and their under-representation in tertiary-level institutions. Stakeholders have engaged in the debate through various fora, most recently those created by the Government of Jamaica in the island-wide public consultations carried out by the Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture (MOEY&C) and the deliberations of the national Task Force on Educational Reform (TFER). These fora have resulted in, among other things, a national vision statement for education, which emerged from the Ministry of Education's national consultations, and recommendations for a transformed education system contained in the TFER report published in late 2004.

Within this context, particularly with respect to the widely expressed concern for the performance of male students in the Jamaican education system, USAID/Jamaica commissioned this study to determine the reasons for, and possible interventions to address, the underachievement of male students. The assignment's Scope of Work (SOW) was based on the local research findings, which indicated that gender inequities in school participation and achievement become evident among students in Jamaica as soon as they enter school. The

research also indicated that boys lagged behind girls in both attendance and achievement and that they did not receive equal treatment and attention in the classroom.

The purpose of this assessment was to explore the role that gender plays in boys' and girls' development, performance, and outcomes in school, with the goal of unearthing strategies that could address differential performance and impact. In the process, the researchers examined the nature and function of gender dynamics in teaching and learning at home, at school, and in the wider society.

The study findings show generalized weaknesses in overall student attendance and achievement in the Jamaican education system. Our research shows that, while boys lag furthest behind in attendance and literacy, girls also perform below age- and grade-appropriate levels. Like others before it, this study identified a number of causative factors related to student underachievement in Jamaica. It indicates the need for a mix of interventions undertaken by a variety of actors to create better outcomes for students.

This study highlights the fact that traditional gender socialization and stereotypes are significant factors in the educational experiences, expectations, and outcomes for boys and girls. The findings further demonstrate that there is cause for concern about, and need for, targeted interventions to address gender disparities that exist in the educational experiences and outcomes of all students in the Jamaican education system.

The purpose of this assessment was to explore the role that gender plays in boys' and girls' development, performance, and outcomes in school, with the goal of unearthing strategies that could address differential performance and impact.

Alongside gender inequalities, the study shows an education system with wide variation and inequalities in terms of physical, social, and human resources ... significant numbers of both boys and girls perform at unacceptable academic standards.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study finds clear and persistent gender inequalities, as follows:

- Traditional gender roles and expectations for boys and girls exist in the home and are perpetuated in school and the broader society;
- Both sexes have uneven enrollment and attendance records; but the data for girls is higher than that for boys, with the gap widening considerably at the tertiary level;
- Girls' academic performance is better than boys' at the primary level but is not consistently so at the secondary level;
- Course choice and selection for boys and girls are gender stereotyped;
- Despite the underachievement of boys in education, more males are employed and employable than females.

Alongside gender inequalities, the study shows an education system with wide variation and inequalities in terms of physical, social, and human resources, including staffing, quality of instruction, and leadership. The net effect of these systemic inequalities is that significant numbers of both boys and girls perform at unacceptable academic standards, which puts them at a disadvantage for realizing their full potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations offered in this report build on the experiences and successes of existing projects, which meet the objectives of USAID's current strategy, specifically:

Strategic Objective (SO) 4: Increasing Literacy and Numeracy among Targeted Jamaican Youth

- Intermediate Result (IR): 1 Improved Quality of Teaching

- IR2: Increased School Attendance
- IR3: Improved Management of Schools
- IR4.4: Number of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) Delivering Services to "At-Risk" Youth

In addition to being based on the findings of this assessment, the recommendations are also in keeping with the TFER recommendations relating to governance and management, curriculum, teaching and learning support, and stakeholder participation.

The specific recommendations presented here fall into 13 categories.

MAINSTREAM GENDER IN USAID STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR EDUCATION

Mechanisms are needed to mainstream gender-specific analysis and interventions into USAID/Jamaica's Strategic Objectives to move toward addressing the particular concerns of both boys and girls in education. Much concern is being expressed in Jamaica about the education system in general and male underachievement in particular—but such focus runs the risk of undertaking interventions that improve the performance of male students at the expense of females. Assessment findings suggest that achieving "best practice" will depend on a strategy that is informed by analyses of, and interventions to meet, the needs of both groups of learners.

USAID/Jamaica should position itself to play a leadership role in addressing boys' needs without compromising the educational needs of girls by recognizing and taking a gender-equality approach to its planned interventions. The new strategy should emphasize community partnerships and linkages and synergies with other strategic interventions.

This study recommends developing a set of gender-mainstreaming strategies for inclusion in the program design for SO 12 of

USAID/Jamaica's new strategy 2005–2009 (532-012). It is important to incorporate a gender equality perspective in the language and design of the Education Results Framework. In particular, USAID/Jamaica may wish to consider the inclusion of a gender-specific Intermediate Result with supporting indicators. This would entail including objectives, outputs, and activities that expressly focus on promoting gender equality in the design of USAID/Jamaica's education projects. The design would then present appropriate indicators to measure progress and impact in the implementation of these gender-based activities.

DEVELOP AND/OR SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER-TRAINING MODULES

This study found that parents, teachers, principals, and students hold traditional views on the roles, expected behaviors, and responsibilities of males and females and that these views influence their actions, interactions, and relationships in ways that perpetuate inequitable gender-specific outcomes. Therefore, a major recommendation is for an intervention that can:

- Provide information on gender socialization and its impact on males and females and increase awareness of gender dynamics among parents, teachers, principals, and students;
- Sensitize parents and educators to the need for strategies to achieve equitable and fair treatment of boys and girls in both the home and school settings;
- Provide technical assistance to schools to enable them to incorporate gender analysis in their School Development Planning process and to develop strategies to address both boys' and girls' confidence and self-esteem while improving their achievement in traditional and non-traditional subjects;

- Sensitize students to gender issues through the schools' life skills curricula and other existing programs; provide students with an opportunity to make choices that are not based on traditional gender stereotypes; improve gender relations among students and enable them to learn and express themselves in both single-sex and co-educational settings.

BUILD CAPACITY OF EDUCATORS TO CREATE CHILD-CENTERED CLASSROOMS

This study recommends building schools' capacity to encourage and implement child-centered classrooms. While too-large class sizes often compromise an optimal learning environment, teachers also need help in identifying and implementing strategies to meet students' needs and enliven the learning experience. During this research, the team visited schools, such as the St. Peter Claver Primary School, which are working toward this goal despite difficult social and environmental circumstances. The efforts of such schools need to be documented, supported, publicized, and generalized with appropriate adaptations to suit different contexts.

EXPAND INTERVENTIONS WITH A FOCUS ON LITERACY

The USAID/Jamaica-funded project, New Horizons for Primary Schools, and the recently completed Jamaica All-Age Schools Project funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), have strong literacy strategies that need to be more widely disseminated among teachers. This study indicates the critical need to continue the focus on improving literacy, with greater emphasis on the early childhood years and primary grades 1 through 4. This focus, linked to the gender training module, would emphasize the importance of reading and literacy as a life skill for both boys and girls.

It is important to incorporate a gender equality perspective in the language and design of the Education Results Framework.

Students had better outcomes in schools where principals and teachers collaborated to create a challenging and supportive learning environment; where rules were clear, fair, and consistently applied; and where all stakeholders, including educators, students, and parents, took part in the decision-making process and were held accountable for doing their part.

BUILD ON SUCCESSFUL AT-RISK PROGRAMS

The study recommends continuing support for at-risk programs. Two programs, the New Horizons for Primary Schools Project and the Uplifting Adolescents Project, have existing mechanisms of counseling, group discussion, and decision-making. They address the needs of poor-performing students, youths at risk of dropping out of school, and others who have already dropped out of school. These programs should incorporate modules for gender equality training, aimed at fostering positive and supportive relationships, into their HIV/AIDS, health and/or family life education curricula.

SUPPORT NATIONAL FORA

With the publication and presentation of the TFER findings and recommendations to Parliament, an important next step involves facilitating public education and discussion on the recommendations advocating for a radical overhaul of the education system. Gender equity in education is a necessary and important component of such an overhaul. How this is to be achieved is a matter of debate currently underway in Jamaica, but is not explicitly addressed in the report of the Task Force. USAID could therefore make a valuable contribution to the national discussion and decision-making by supporting national fora of stakeholders to:

- Become informed about the recommendations of the Task Force and, in that context, the analysis, findings and recommendations of this report;
- Discuss, debate, and form understanding and consensus on the best strategies for achieving gender equality in education as part of the recommended overhaul of the system.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS TO STRENGTHEN STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

The MOEY&C has implemented projects aimed at increasing community involvement in the development of schools; however, these projects do not seem to have extended beyond the pilot phase despite their demonstrated effectiveness. USAID should assist the MOEY&C in reviewing those models (such as the School Community Outreach Programme for Education [SCOPE] project and the Adopt-A-School Programme) with a view to reintroducing and/or expanding the relevant, successful components throughout the education system.

SUPPORT GENDER-SENSITIVE CURRICULUM REVIEW/REFORM

The MOEY&C has ongoing programs for curriculum reform, and the Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/National Training Agency (HEART/NTA) takes part in strengthening technical high school curricula. USAID could add value to these efforts by providing support for activities aimed at achieving gender-balanced curricula, with strategies for achieving equitable representation of boys and girls in all areas. This goal would necessitate targeted outreach to students to increase enrollment in non-traditional courses of study.

PROMOTE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

On visits to schools, researchers observed that a critical factor in student performance was the vision and sense of mission of principals and teachers. Students had better outcomes in schools where principals and teachers collaborated to create a challenging and supportive learning environment; where rules were clear, fair, and consistently applied; and where all stakeholders, including educators, students, and parents, took part in the decision-making process and were held

accountable for doing their part. This was the case even when such schools were in similar settings as those schools with poor outcomes.

The study recommends transformational leadership training (not to be confused with management training) for principals and other staff members. Not only does research reveal that effective leadership is key to change and reform in schools, the far-reaching recommendations of the Task Force on Education demand implementation of a new, visionary type of school leadership. As part of the process of transforming school leadership and culture, our recommendations include providing support for sustaining and expanding the “Change from Within” program so that it has system-wide implementation.

STRENGTHEN OVERALL TEACHER TRAINING

We propose the development and strengthening of pre-service and in-service training curricula to address child-centered learning environments, teaching of reading in the integrated curriculum at the primary level, and gender sensitization. This could be achieved in collaboration with activities already underway, such as the Centers for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) program. In particular, all USAID projects with teacher training activities underway should integrate gender sensitization training modules, and USAID should support efforts of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of West Indies (UWI), to develop and implement such modules for use in Teachers’ Colleges.

SUPPORT MOEY&C EFFORTS TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN MALE TEACHERS

To respond directly to the dearth of male teachers and role models across the education system, recommendations have been made that the MOEY&C implement special measures to recruit more male teachers. Our field research found that, while female

teachers agreed with the need for more male teachers and role models, they were adamant that their recruitment should not be conducted on a basis that creates inequities in remuneration and other conditions of work for male and female teachers.

One strategy could serve to increase the number of male teachers without compromising equity in the profession: a targeted promotional/publicity campaign highlighting the benefits of teaching as a career option for males. USAID should consider hosting consultations with the MOEY&C and relevant stakeholders to examine the feasibility of a publicity campaign aimed at sensitizing males to the impact they could have on children’s futures as positive, teaching, role models. The campaign could highlight current male teachers as spokespersons and include vignettes of male and female teachers working together to improve the education environment for boys and girls. Such a campaign would contribute to a positive step forward in dispelling myths that education is not “macho” and may help make schooling more attractive for male learners.

SUPPORT A NATIONAL MENTORSHIP FOR STUDENTS PROGRAM

Existing partners of USAID, such as Youth Opportunities Unlimited, have a strong track record in the implementation of mentoring programs. A special thrust to recruit male mentors and to provide both male and female mentors with gender-sensitivity training could impact positively on boys’ and girls’ self-esteem, motivation, and performance.

STRENGTHEN USAID’S EVALUATION PROCEDURES

As supported in the current SO, USAID should continue to focus on developing and strengthening evaluation mechanisms to gauge what is working and what should be improved with respect to gender-related and other education indicators.

To respond directly to the dearth of male teachers and role models across the education system, recommendations have been made that the MOEY&C implement special measures to recruit more male teachers.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Gender refers to a set of qualities and behaviors expected from males and females by society. Gender roles are learned and can be affected by factors such as education or economics. They vary widely within and between cultures. While an individual's (biological) sex does not change, gender roles are socially determined and can evolve over time.¹

Gender equality means that males and females have equal conditions for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development (OECD, 1998). It means males and females have equal enjoyment of goods, opportunities, resources, and rewards at home, school, and society. It also means the society values males and females equally for their similarities and differences and the diverse roles they are able to play. It means, too, that males and females enjoy equality of rights, freedoms, responsibilities, and opportunities. Striving towards gender equality entails a thoughtful and strategic process that examines long-term outcomes for males and females and actively creates actions and mechanisms to minimize and eliminate disparities. Such a process is not necessarily linear as different steps or stages can occur simultaneously.

Gender parity is the first step toward achieving gender equality in education. It refers to a situation of proportional representation of males and females in an education system relative to the population per age group. Gender parity would be achieved in enrollment if the numbers of males and females represented were commensurate with their respective population percentage for particular ages. It is the most-often utilized criteria for measuring the gender situation in a country's education system. However, reaching gender parity is just the initial phase in achieving gender equality.

Gender equity is the second step towards gender equality. It involves fairness in representation, participation, and outcomes or benefit among males and females. This does not mean that boys and girls should necessarily receive the same treatment, as individual differences among them demand different interventions, or that one group should receive preferential treatment. The goal in terms of equity is that both groups have a fair chance of having their needs met and have equal opportunities for realizing their full potentials as human beings.

1. <http://www.engenderhealth.org/wh/sg/egwhat.html>

INTRODUCTION

Between September 27 and October 29, 2004, a team of five researchers provided technical assistance to the United States Agency for International Development/Jamaica (USAID/Jamaica) to conduct a gender analysis of the education of boys and girls in Jamaica. Management Systems International (MSI), through the USAID Office of Women in Development EQUATE task order, fielded the team.

STATEMENT OF WORK

USAID/Jamaica proposed focusing on the needs of boys in grades 1 through 4 of poor-performing primary schools; in grades 7 through 9 in selected upgraded secondary schools; and at-risk youth attending classes presented by selected non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The task was to answer a primary set of questions regarding the conditions and experiences of these three categories of students and to propose a menu of activities to address the needs of boys in ways that promote gender equality for both boys and girls.

USAID/Jamaica proposed five primary research areas to frame the research approach. These included:

- Factors contributing to gender inequality in education;
- Teaching methods and practices in schools that have impacts on gender stereotypes;
- Measures to mitigate gender inequalities;
- Measures to prepare at-risk students; and

- Changes needed in institutional practices and social relations in school.

This research and report aims to further USAID/Jamaica's efforts to promote gender equality in education. As a result of trends that increasingly seem to favor girls in the education system, the EQUATE project undertook the task of providing feedback on and recommendations for moving towards gender equality in basic education in Jamaica.

This study looks at the situation with respect to the educational experiences and results for male and female students and, thus, applies a gender analytical approach. We look at the situation through a gender lens as if putting on a pair of glasses. Looking through one lens, the study examines the participation, needs, and realities for boys; looking through the second lens, the study examines the participation, needs, and realities of girls. Thus, the study provides a full vision—presenting information on the distinctive realities for boys and girls, men and women, as well as the factors that contribute to those realities.

TECHNICAL TEAM

The five-person technical assistance team, selected for its technical expertise and gender balance, included two local gender experts, one male and one female. The principal team members were three researchers and practitioners with extensive experience and qualifications in participatory research and facilitation methods. A logistician/researcher and an additional research assistant supported them during the initial stages of the assessment.

The EQUATE project undertook the task of providing feedback on and recommendations for moving towards gender equality in basic education in Jamaica.

The fieldwork, conducted through a number of focus groups, enabled the researchers to listen and capture the experiences and recommendations of students, parents, teachers, principals, policymakers and other important stakeholders.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The researchers combined participatory learning and action (PLA) research methods² with traditional quantitative analysis. Secondary research and qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data was carried out. The fieldwork, conducted through a number of focus groups, enabled the researchers to listen and capture the experiences and recommendations of students, parents, teachers, principals, policymakers and other important stakeholders.

FOCUS GROUP PROCEDURES

The principal researchers carefully designed open-ended focus-group questions based on the primary questions to be addressed as per the SOW. Focus groups were convened in six schools from October 4th through 13th with students, teachers, and parents; each discussion lasted for approximately 35 to 45 minutes. The researchers observed classrooms and took notes on teaching methods and practices, paying particular attention to interactions among and between males and females.

The focus groups in schools brought together randomly selected groups of participants, including teachers, students, and parents. Researchers met with male and female students with separately, each group facilitated by a male and female researcher, respectively. Questions drew forth discussions by participants about gender norms; expectations for girls and boys at home and school, including education and school performance; their ways of supporting boys and girls; and their methods of disciplining boys and girls. These questions sought to unearth similarities

and differences in attitudes and perceptions in the rearing and education of boys and girls.

Focus groups were also held with directors who implemented NGO programs for at-risk boys and girls who had dropped out of the formal school settings. These programs focused on children's participation, encouraged student-led initiatives, and included strong peer counseling.

In addition, two larger focus-group breakfast meetings were held. The first involved gender experts and donors, while participants at the second included senior educators and officers of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Culture; representatives of other government agencies, such as the Planning Institute of Jamaica; and other interested stakeholders. Both meetings lasted for approximately two hours. The first group identified critical issues contributing to the gender equality picture in Jamaica and made suggestions as to how and by whom these issues might be addressed. The second group identified positive indicators in the education of boys and girls in Jamaica, critical and challenging issues in the education system that relate to gender and gender equality, and recommended ways to address these challenges and issues.

This qualitative study reports on the observations and the words of focus group participants to understand and describe the gender dynamics in schools, at home, and in society.

COMPOSITION OF FOCUS GROUPS

Student Focus Groups: A total of eight student focus-group discussions were held, comprising students from one informal and seven formal at-risk programs. Researchers

2. PLA is an approach for learning about and engaging with communities. The approach can be used in identifying needs, planning, monitoring, or evaluating projects and programs. While being a powerful consultation tool, it also offers the opportunity to go beyond mere consultation and promote the active participation of communities in the issues and interventions that shape their lives. PLA tools combine the sharing of insights with analysis and, as such, provide a catalyst for communities themselves to identify their own needs and create action plans.

visited seven schools, including one primary and one junior high; three high schools (one in a rural setting); one all-age rural school; and one at-risk school program. Students in these schools ranged in age from 9 to 22. Ranging in age from 10 to 18, a total of 251 randomly selected students—122 boys and 129 girls—participated in the focus groups, which were conducted in a circle-style, informal discussion-group format over five days. The team opted to separate the girls and boys to create a safe environment and encourage open and candid discussion.

It is important to note that all students in the focus groups came from low-income families.³

Teacher Focus Groups: Forty teachers (11 male and 29 female) participated in focus-group discussions, which were held in the same settings as the student focus groups. The researchers posed questions that drew on teachers' perceptions, teaching methods, methods of discipline, gender roles and expectations, and messages related to gender.

Parent Focus Groups: Seventeen individuals (13 females and 4 males) participated in parent focus-group discussions. This category included mothers and fathers, single parents, stepmothers and stepfathers, grandmothers, guardians, and other caregivers.

Individual Principal Interviews: Six principals (4 female and 2 male) from the same schools as teachers and students participated. These principals had between 8 and 30 years of experience.

Directors of At-Risk Programs Interviews:

This group included 4 participants, all of whom were female.

Educators Focus Group: Eight educators (4 male and 4 female) from government and non-governmental organizations were represented in this group.

Gender Experts & Donor Focus Groups: Fifteen representatives (12 female and 3 male) from donor agencies and the government, including the Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture (MOEY&C) were included within this group.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

The short time span for this assessment limited the breadth of the sample, both numerically and geographically. Short notice to potential participants had an impact on the number of persons attending focus-group sessions. This was especially a problem for the parent focus groups.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Three chapters follow this introduction and contain the:

- Situation analysis
- Findings
- Recommendations and Conclusions

This qualitative study reports on the observations and the words of focus group participants to understand and describe the gender dynamics in schools, at home, and in society.

3. All participants and existing research on the education system make note that boys and girls in private preparatory schools are faring better than those in public schools. Research on poverty and class indicate that these two factors have a huge impact on educational outcomes for boys and girls.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

With an area of 11,244 square kilometers, Jamaica is the third-largest island in the Caribbean after Cuba and Hispaniola. The population at the end of 2003, estimated at 2,641,600, reflects a constant annual rate of growth of 0.6 percent since 1999, except for 2002 when it grew by 0.5 percent.⁴

A trend over the past three decades—the population’s changing profile—could have a positive spread effect on the education system through increased opportunity for investment and a lower teacher-pupil ratio. The population of children under the age of 18 years fell from 53 percent in 1975 to 39 percent in 2000. This downward movement is expected to continue into the year 2020 when the proportion of this same-age cohort in the population is projected to be 30 percent.⁵

However, the prospect of increased investment in education could remain just that, given the island’s vulnerability to natural disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes that damage infrastructure and crops and disrupt various productive activities. Besides having a negative

impact on the economy, these disasters often disrupt children’s education for weeks, as schools are flooded and/or otherwise damaged or are in use as designated shelters.

Additionally, like most small-island economies of the Caribbean, Jamaica’s economy continues to be characterized as open, dependent, and vulnerable. It depends largely on tourism, bauxite mining, agriculture, light manufacturing and a growing service sector for its mainstay. This vulnerability was reflected in negative growth with high inflation rates during the 1990s (up to 81 percent in 1991). However, the economy grew over the past five years with an increase in Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2.1 percent⁶ in 2003. Notwithstanding the economic growth, the debt stock according to the 2003 Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica (ESSJ) was at J\$671,970 million at December 2003 compared with J\$572,696.7 million at December 2002.⁷ This requires a debt-service payment of a staggering 62 percent⁸ of total expenditure and imposes a serious limitation on funds available for education and other sectors of the economy.

A trend over the past three decades—the population’s changing profile—could have a positive spread effect on the education system through increased opportunity for investment and a lower teacher-pupil ratio. The population of children under the age of 18 years fell from 53 percent in 1975 to 39 percent in 2000.

4. The Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2003, *Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica (ESSJ)*, ch. 20.

5. UNICEF 2000, *Jamaican Children and Their Families*, p. 22.

6. ESSJ, 2003, ch3.

7. ESSJ, 2003, ch3.

8. UNICEF 2000, *Jamaican Children and Their Families*, p23.

Jamaica's formal public education system comprises seven levels, each of which vary widely as to types of schools, the quality of instruction, and physical facilities.

OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Jamaica's formal public education system comprises the following seven levels,⁹ each of which vary widely as to types of schools, the quality of instruction, and physical facilities.

Early Childhood Education. Three- to six-year-old children may enter the educational system in kindergarten; basic and nursery schools; and in the infant departments of some primary, all-age, and junior high schools.

Primary Education. Young children from six to eleven years old enter in grades 1 to 6 of primary, all-age, primary, and junior high and preparatory schools.

Secondary Education. Youths from 12 to 16 may progress for five years in grades 7 to 11 in secondary, technical high, and comprehensive high schools. There are junior high, all-age and primary and junior high schools with grades 7 through 9 only. Youths 17 to 18 years old in grades 12 and 13 may attend agricultural schools, with three years of upper secondary education and with some schools offering two years beyond upper secondary.

First Stage of Tertiary Education. Students may attend teacher-training colleges, community colleges, the school of visual and performing arts, and the Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/National Training Agency (HEART/NTA). The University Council of Jamaica offers accreditation to first-stage tertiary education in specific subject areas to a number of private institutions in fields such as theology, insurance, and management training.

Second Stage of Tertiary Education.

Students may attend the University of the West Indies at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels or the University of Technology with some courses coordinated and in collaboration with the HEART/NTA Vocational Training and Development Institute in technical and vocational skills. A growing number of overseas universities have established linkages in Jamaica and offer under- and post-graduate courses in areas such as business administration, computer studies, teaching, and banking.

Special Education. This includes programs across the country in various locations and institutions for blind, deaf and hearing-impaired, mentally handicapped, multiple-handicapped, physically handicapped, learning-disabled and gifted students.

The HEART/NTA. This program offers a wide selection of technical and vocational training in a number of locations nationwide for youth 17 and over.

According to the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), the education system in 2001 had a total of 127 early childhood institutions, 573 primary-level schools, and 595-secondary level institutions along with 161 private preparatory schools and 59 private secondary high schools. In addition, some 1,700 recognized basic schools offer early childhood education.¹⁰

STUDENT PLACEMENT

Most very young children are registered in cost-free infant and basic schools that are a "stone's throw" away from their homes. Kindergartens, most often fee-paying private preparatory schools, are costly and out of the

9. See Figure 1 in the Annex for an illustration of the system.

10. PIOJ, *The Jamaican Child* (2002), p28.

reach of poor families. From these early childhood institutions, children move to primary schools, which are usually free and provide universal enrollment. Student placement at the lower secondary levels is governed by their scores in the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT), which replaced the Common Entrance Examination that lasted for over 30 years. The Grade Nine Achievement Test and the Junior High School Certificate place children in the upper secondary level. The General Certificate in Education (GCE) and the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), which is phasing out the GCE, place students at the tertiary level of the education system.¹¹

FUNDING EDUCATION

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) is the principal source of education financing in the country, with an annual allocation of education funds ranging from 10.57 percent to 16.43 percent of the total budget since 1978 (except 1994/95). These allocations are virtually double the amount provided for health and housing over the same period. However, allocations have declined over the last two financial years (FYs). For FY 2003–2004 the allocation of J\$23.1 billion—8.8 percent of total budget—reflects a decline of J\$0.2 billion over revised estimates for FY 2002–2003.¹² The allocation for 2002–2003 was J\$23.2 billion—10.4 percent of the GOJ’s Budget and 6.1 percent of the GDP.¹³

Funds from multilateral and bilateral agencies, non-government organizations, the private sector and students augment the GOJ’s budgetary allocation to education; such projects are handled through what is called the “Capital B Budget.” Taxation revenues

cover the cost of projects funded from the GOJ’s budget, which is called the “Capital A Budget.” For example, Capital expenses totaled J\$868.5 million in the GOJ’s 2002–2003 budget, of which Capital A programs undertaken by the GOJ amounted to J\$274.5 million.

The GOJ introduced a cost-sharing scheme in secondary schools in 1994–1995, with the students’ share covering school operations less salaries. Fees ranged from a low of J\$4,000 to a high of J\$8,000 per student per year, and some schools charged an additional amount for registration. Some J\$990.5 million was collected through the scheme in the 2002–2003 financial year (ESSJ, 2003). The scheme also operated a financial assistance plan for students unable to pay their portion of cost sharing. The MOEY&C paid J\$387.7 million, Members of Parliament J\$8.9 million, and other sources J\$3.1 million to assist 122,335 students in the 2002–2003 school year. “The Cost Sharing Scheme is scheduled to be phased out by the Government over the next three years” (PIOJ, 2003, sec. 22.3).

The MOEY&C operates a policy of free primary education. Nevertheless, many primary schools charge students a fee, and some families are faced with the challenge of paying for school uniforms, some textbooks, pencils, paper, transportation, and lunches.

Poor student performance on both internal and external examinations has generated increased stakeholder attention to educational development and reform over the past few months. Early childhood education has become a priority focus area for more resources for two reasons: Low performance can be detected and addressed at an early

Poor student performance on both internal and external examinations has generated increased stakeholder attention to educational development and reform.

11. See Figure 2 in the Annex for an illustration of the flow chart.

12. Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), *Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica (ESSJ)*, 2003.

13. Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEY&C), *Estimate of Expenditure for March 31, 2004* (as presented).

The Government and the Opposition agreed on a parliamentary resolution committing them to a five-year education plan, which included increased expenditure in the education sector, improvement in teacher quality, and shifting resources to the lower tiers of the education system.

stage, and the Government has paid more attention to other levels of the system over the years. Thus, early childhood education received an increase of 19.3 percent¹⁴ in GOJ budget allocations for FY 2003–2004. An Early Childhood Commission was also established to set standards and to regulate and monitor the operations of early childhood institution nationwide.

The Government and the Opposition also agreed on a parliamentary resolution committing them to a five-year education plan, which included increased expenditure in the education sector, improvement in teacher quality, and shifting resources to the lower tiers of the education system. The Government recently presented the report and recommendations of the Task Force on Educational Reform (TFER), which indicates that, with respect to financing the education system, the:

*Government of Jamaica allocated 10 percent of the 2003–04 budget to Education. The Parliamentary Resolution committed the Government of Jamaica to increasing the expenditure allocation to the MOEY&C...until its allocation amounts to 15 percent of the national budget...it was therefore expected that of a total of \$328 billion in the 2004–05 budget, education would have been allocated 11 percent or \$36.1 billion. Instead only \$30.1 billion or 9.2 percent was so allocated.*¹⁵

The Report notes further that:

Based on the recommendations by the Task Force, it is estimated that the...system

*requires an incremental injection of approximately \$22 billion in capital expenditure and \$16 billion in recurrent expenditure over the next two years (fiscal years 2005 and 2006). Over ten fiscal years, 2005–2014, the total capital expenditure...is projected at approximately \$65 billion.*¹⁶

EXISTING PROGRAMS IN EDUCATION

This study reviewed existing programs to advise USAID of where best to make its intervention. Most of the existing programs listed in the Appendices will end in 2005, except for those related to the curriculum reform process—Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) 2 and the Primary Education Support Project (PESP), which continue to 2006–2007. Many of these programs focused on a select number of institutions with few components being expanded and sustained nationwide.

Apart from the programs listed, other programs target poverty-related difficulties of access and inequity in the system. The Program for Advancement in Education and Health (PATH), funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the GOJ, provide social support to poor families with a requirement that the children in these families attend school regularly and visit clinics for health checks. The MOEY&C operates the School Feeding Program, which provides a meal per day to augment the nutrition received by children in need.

14. ESSJ, sec 22.2.

15. Task Force on Educational Reform; Report, 2004, pg. 139.

16. *Ibid.*

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The performance of boys, girls, and youth at the early childhood, primary and secondary educational levels is a good indicator of the education system's quality and effectiveness. Illustrated and reported below are the forms of students' assessment, results, and employment of the results at the three levels, which mirror the efficacy of the education system.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY LEVELS

In the late 1980s, the GOJ/IDB Primary Education Improvement Project introduced assessment of student performance at the primary level. The resultant curriculum-based National Assessment Program (NAP) allows for informed decisions about instructional methods and students' progress for primary education, grades 1 through 6. The NAP tests, piloted in a sample of schools since 1987, were formally integrated in the system during the late 1990s. The test and inventories are reported below with current results.

- **Grade 1 Reading Readiness Inventory (GRI)**—taken by children upon their entry into primary school from early childhood institutions, provides diagnostic information on the preparedness of primary-school entrants to participate effectively.
- **Grade 3 Diagnostic Test (GTDT)**—taken at the end of primary grade 3 to diagnose levels of mastery and weakness in reading and mathematics as a basis for remedial work.

- **Grade 4 Literacy Test (GFLT)**—taken at the end of primary grade 4 to determine promotion or repetition. Students who perform poorly can take summer remedial classes to improve their likelihood of being promoted.
- **Grade 6 Achievement Test (GSAT)**—taken at the end of primary grade 6, helps determine placement of students in various types of secondary schools.

Assessment results show that both boys and girls performed below expectation. However, girls outperformed boys on all the tests. This is not the case for the tests at the secondary level.

PRIMARY-LEVEL OUTCOMES

Throughout the primary level of the education system, upwards of 40 percent to 50 percent of students have not achieved mastery of basic literacy and numeracy skills. From as early as grade 1, the 2003 national assessment results reflect generally low levels of student readiness. Failure to address this problem in grades 2 and 3 result in high illiteracy levels in grade 4, as indicated by grade 4 literacy test results.

GRI results for 2003¹⁷ revealed national mastery scores of 86.3 percent for visual motor coordination, 54.4 percent for visual perception, 57.1 percent for auditory discrimination, and 68.7 percent for number and letter recognition. This indicates that, except for visual-motor coordination, about 40 percent of the students assessed needed remedial intervention. In contrast, private preparatory school scores exceeded those of the public basic and infant schools in every inventory.

Assessment results show that both boys and girls performed below expectation. However, girls outperformed boys on all the tests, except for those at the secondary level.

17. MOEY&C Assessment Unit, 2003.

At every grade level, students of better-resourced preparatory schools generally achieve at much higher levels than their counterparts in public schools.

GTDT¹⁸ results for 2003 appear even more discouraging than the GRI. In language arts, only 13.6 percent mastered five skill areas and 11.9 percent mastered four skill areas. For mathematics, only 3.8 percent mastered five skill areas and 4.9 percent mastered four skill areas. By grade 4, the problem of underachievement is even more acute.

The caption in *The Daily Gleaner* of October 12, 2004, “Disturbing Trend: Henry-Wilson [Minister of Education, Youth and Culture] not happy with grade four reading results,” indicates that the problem is a major concern for the country. The *Daily Gleaner* reported that, of the 52,910 students who completed the GFLT, 29 percent attained near mastery level, 57 percent mastered all three sections of the test, and more than 13 percent were at the non-mastery level. In 2003, 57.7 percent of students mastered all three sections of the test, 23 percent were at the near mastery level, and 18.4 percent were at the non-mastery level. The *Daily Gleaner* quoted the Minister as indicating that the problem of inadequate specialist teachers to detect and address remedial needs among students from as early as grade 1 continued to impact negatively on the literacy scores of grade 4 students.

GSAT 2003 composite scores for the core subjects are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: National Level Grade Six Achievement Test Results, 2003

Subject Area	Composite Scores (%)
Mathematics	47.7
Language Arts	52
Science	47.6
Social Studies	54.2

18. Task Force on Educational Reform: Final Report, 2004.

At every grade level, students of better-resourced preparatory schools generally achieve at much higher levels than their counterparts in public schools. On the 2003 GSAT, in mathematics, the mean score for private preparatory schools was 74 percent compared to 47.8 percent for primary schools. In language arts, scores were 78.8 percent for private preparatory schools compared to 52 percent for primary schools.

OUTCOMES AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

The CXC examination and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination measure student performance at the secondary level. Four or more subject passes at CXC for grades 1 to 11, including mathematics and English, meet the minimum entry requirement for most tertiary programs. Six or more subjects are required to pursue the Cambridge GCE A-level courses and are needed for matriculation to the island’s three universities. (ESSJ, 2003 sec. 22.12).

Notably, 77 percent of the cohort of students in the terminal school grade who should have been eligible to sit the examination did so in 2003, compared to 70.8 percent in 2002. However, only 55.8 percent of the cohort sat English language, while 46.1 percent did mathematics in 2003. “Compared to 2002, there was a 13.7 percentage point decline [in 2003] to 45.0 percent passes in English language, while pass rate for mathematics remained at 36.0 percent” (ESSJ, 2003). These outcomes varied dramatically depending on the type of secondary school that students attended. Consistently, students with the lowest GSAT scores are placed in the non-traditional secondary, all-age, and junior high schools, and they do poorly on

secondary-level examinations. The analysis depicted in Table 2 of the 2001 to 2003 CXC results gives an indication of the situation.

GENDER ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Many and varied reasons account for students' underachievement. Students—boys and girls—are not a homogenous group. All learners come to school with influences, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and values influenced by the environments in which they live. These differences occur not only between the two groups of children but also within the groups. Factors such as family socio-economic status, family formation, and the quality of family interaction; religious beliefs and practices; and the extent of adherence to traditional or non-traditional child-rearing practices all serve to create inter- and intra-group differences.

Schools in Jamaica vary widely as to quality, including those falling within a similar category such as early childhood, primary/elementary, or secondary. Variations relate to their physical, social and resource (human, financial, instructional) environments and to the effectiveness of their leadership. Further, school location affects the atmosphere in which learning takes place. Some schools are situated in disaster-prone areas. Others are in communities with constant and extreme outbreaks of violence,

while still others are in tranquil rural settings or relatively crime- and violence-free middle- to high-income communities.

The national policy environment also has a significant impact on, and provides the backdrop for, the educational process and its outcomes. Among changes taking place in curriculum reform and student assessment in Jamaica, new measures to achieve accountability on the part of teachers and school administrators are being vigorously discussed.¹⁹ Continuous strategies to expand access and enrollment accompany various measures being instituted to address school discipline. However, in relation to such goals as Education for All, significant policy gaps preclude a clear mandate with respect to children with special needs and clear guidelines on gender equality. While changes are taking place to make schools more child-centered, they are still, for the most part, curriculum-centered, and teachers feel hard-pressed to tailor their instructional activities to the needs and abilities of students.

One must keep these and other factors in mind in any attempt to explain the educational results of Jamaica's schools in general and for males or females in particular. These factors must also be considered when formulating decisions about appropriate interventions to support a goal of gender equity/equality in educational outcomes for all students.

Among changes taking place in curriculum reform and student assessment in Jamaica, new measures to achieve accountability on the part of teachers and school administrators are being vigorously discussed.

Table 2: 2001 and 2003 CXC Test Results

	2001	2003	2001	2003	2001	2003
	Secondary High Schools		Upgraded High Schools		Technical High Schools	
Mathematics	40.0%	51.0%	11.0%	17.0%	26%	27.00%
English Language	74.0%	65.0%	38.0%	27.0%	40%	30.0%

¹⁹ Measures being discussed include contracts for principals and teachers and evaluating teachers and schools on the basis of students' performance.

Post-secondary enrollment reflects both changing patterns in the male/female division of occupational/career choices as well as the extent to which gender stereotypes persist and strongly influence what male and female students do and strive for.

ENROLLMENT

While male and female enrollment numbers at the early childhood level are nearly equal, shifts occur later in the system. The primary level has significantly more male than female students, but fewer boys than girls are enrolled at the secondary level and even fewer at post-secondary. Table 3 shows that the gap widens in favor of female students the further up the educational ladder one looks.

Where male students do dominate enrollment at post-secondary levels is usually in technical subjects, sports, or other fields of study traditional to them. Post-secondary enrollment reflects both changing patterns in the male/female division of occupational/career choices as well as the extent to which gender stereotypes persist and strongly influence what male and female students do and strive for. Enrollment data for 2000–2001 for the University of the West Indies indicate that, overall, far more females than males in the student body. Female enrollment surpasses

male enrollment in the faculties of law (17% male, 83% female) and medical sciences (37.2% male, 62.8% female), though the gender gap was small in the pure and applied sciences (48.2% male, 51.8% female).²⁰ See Table 2 in the Annex for a breakdown of enrollment data by tertiary institution (2002–2003).

While looking at university enrollment, note that only a small percentage of the population is represented in tertiary education. On the other hand, for enrollment in HEART/NTA programs where a far greater percentage of the national youth population accesses post-secondary training, gender stereotypes in course selection abound.²¹

ATTENDANCE

Some 14 to 20 percent of males and females have poor school attendance. One article provides data indicating that, in 2002, at the infant school level, the average male daily attendance rate was 78.9 percent compared

TABLE 3: Comparison of Male/Female Enrollment from Early Childhood to Tertiary Level (2002)

Enrollment Levels/ Male, Female, Total	Male	Female	Total
Early Childhood			
Unrecognized Basic Schools	3,017	3,149	6,166
Recognized Basic Schools	59,711	59,480	119,191
<i>Total</i>	62,728	62,629	125,357
Primary Schools (Grades 1–6)	160,550	153,510	314,060
Secondary Schools (Grades 7–13)			
Grades 7–9	72,627	71,678	144,305
Grades 10–13	39,072	43,175	82,247
<i>Total Secondary Schools</i>	111,699	114,853	226,552
Non-formal Training Programs	13,853	19,196	33,049
Tertiary Institutions	13,568	25,564	39,132
Total	362,398	375,752	738,150

Source: JA People; Newsletter, Social and Manpower Division, PIOJ; Vol. 9 No 1; page 21

20. Jamaica Education Statistics 2000-2001, MOEY&C, Kingston, Jamaica.

21. See Table 3 in Annex for breakdown of enrollment data by subject/field (2002/3).

with 81.3 percent for females. At the primary level, the rates were 82.6 percent and 84.5 percent respectively. The disparity widens at the secondary level with male student attendance averaging 82.1 percent compared with 86.4 percent for female.²²

The article notes, however, that attendance rates varied according to school type, with all-age and primary and junior high schools having lower rates of and narrower gender differences in attendance. It states that “the average daily attendance at all-age schools was 70.0 percent with males averaging 70.5 percent and females, 69.2 percent. In the primary and junior high school type, the average attendance rate was 77.7 percent with males averaging 76.3 percent and females 79.6 percent.”

MOEY&C data for attendance at secondary levels by school type show that the lowest attendance rates occur in grades 7 through 9 of all-age and primary and junior high schools. Secondary schools that have grades 7 through 11/12 have attendance rates in the high 80 percent range for both male and female students, and technical high schools have the highest rates of attendance. See Table 4 below.

The attendance data suggest that students with lowest levels of academic achievement have the poorest attendance rates through the all-age, primary and junior high, and newly upgraded secondary schools. Of this group, boys have lower levels of attendance than girls do.

ACHIEVEMENT

Gender achievement differences are evident from the earliest years of school life in Jamaica. According to one report, “An analysis of results for the four areas of the 1998 Grade 1 Readiness Test ... showed that, at the time, girls performed better than boys in all four areas and that the difference was statistically significant in three of the areas: visual and auditory perception, number and letter knowledge.”²³ Data supplied by the MOEY&C indicates a similar pattern for the results of the 2003 assessment.²⁴

As children progress towards the grade 6 level, significant numbers of all students fall behind academically. Results for the Grade 3 Language Diagnostic Test administered in 2002²⁵ show that some 40 percent of students who took the exam fell below the mastery level for phonics, 63.4 percent were below the

Gender achievement differences are evident from the earliest years of school life in Jamaica.

Table 4: Attendance by School Type

Year/ Technical	All Age (7-9)		Primary		Junior High		Secondary	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2000–01	70.3	75.7	75.6	80.9	86.8	89.9	89.1	89.0
2001–02	70.5	69.2	76.3	79.6	84.6	88.3	88.3	90.2
2002–03	63.1	68.1	64.0	68.7	79.2	82.5	83.1	84.3

Source: Planning Institute of Jamaica, July 2004.

22. JA People; Vol.9. No. 1; *Males in Focus: A Newsletter of the Social and Manpower Planning Division.*

23. Bailey, Barbara, *Gender-Sensitive Educational Policy and Practice: The Case of Jamaica.* Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, Mona, April 2003.

24. See Table 5 in Annex.

25. MOEY&C statistics.

The data imply the need for concern that most children are underachieving and for special attention to address the fact that the problem is most pronounced among primary-level boys.

mastery level for structure mechanics, 60.5 percent scored below mastery level for vocabulary, 59.4 percent were below mastery for study skills, and 62.2 percent of the all the children who took the test scored below the mastery level on reading and listening comprehension. On this latter subtest, 36.7 percent of the students performed at the level of near mastery and 25.5 percent demonstrated non-mastery.

The data imply the need for concern that most children are underachieving and for special attention to address the fact that the problem is most pronounced among primary-level boys. The 2001–2003 data showed that girls significantly outperformed boys on each of the subtests of the GLDT. The trend continues up to the grade 6 level, with girls generally out-performing boys on all subtests of the Grade 4 Literacy Test and the Grade 6 Achievement Test.²⁶

Among students who progress to secondary school, those who attend all-age and primary and junior high schools usually have low GSAT scores. For students in these schools, the exit point is at grade 9 where they sit the Grade 9 Achievement Test for placement in secondary or technical high schools for grades 10 through 12/13. In 2000–2001, of 2,084 male students who sat the exam, 1,203 (57.7%) were awarded places. Of the 1,244 females who sat the exam, 896 (72.0 %) were placed.²⁷

After the GSAT, students are placed in upgraded secondary schools and traditional “grammar” high schools that have grades 7 through 12/13 and where students follow either a mainly academic program (as in the case of grammar schools) or a combination of

academic and vocational programs. In the exit examination for the students at these schools, the CXC, performance is highly correlated to the type of school, their available resources and the academic level of students at entry. Again, at the secondary level there are gender differences in courses of study and in achievement. Analyses conducted by Barbara Bailey (2003) on the sex differences in preparation for and performance in the CXC Examination for the 2000–2001 academic year show that:

In 2000–2001, the (CXC) examination was taken by approximately 15.2 percent (5,538) of the grade 11 cohort with females accounting for 52.6 percent of entries for the Basic Proficiency and 68.5 percent of entries for the General and Technical Proficiencies. General and Technical Proficiency subject offerings can be grouped into three tracks: the first comprised of 17 “academic” subjects, the second with two visual and performing arts subjects, and the third with 15 technical-vocational subjects. In the academic grouping, the only subject for which there were more male than female entries was physics, and entries for Visual Arts were male dominated. In the technical vocational areas, however, there was a clear gender divide with males clustered in the technical crafts and females in business studies and the domestic crafts.²⁸

In relation to student performance in the 2000–2001 examinations, she notes that “... the academic subject grouping achievement gaps favored females in 13 of the 17 subjects examined...the gap favored males in four of the 10 science-related subjects including mathematics and in biology ... In the two visual and performing arts subjects, achievement gaps favored girls ...”²⁹

26. See Table 6 in Annex.

27. Jamaica Education Statistics 2000–2001.

28. Bailey, Barbara, *Gender-Sensitive Educational Policy and Practices: The Case of Jamaica*. 2003, p30.

29. *Ibid.* p35.

Although in numeric terms female enrollment (at upper secondary and post-secondary levels), attendance and achievement rates are usually higher than that for males, “when the situation is examined from a qualitative perspective, these same females because of where they are positioned in the ... curriculum actually have less of a competitive advantage than their male counterparts beyond school.”³⁰ This will be explored in more detail in the following section.

For this review, the gender situation in education can be summarized as showing:

- More males than females enrolled in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary (grades 7-9) levels and more girls than boys enrolled in upper secondary, tertiary and other post-secondary level institutions;
- Lower attendance rates for male than female students, especially in primary and junior high schools but also in secondary and technical high schools;
- High attendance levels for both male and female students in the traditional high and technical high schools compared to other types of schools at the secondary level;
- Higher levels of achievement among girls in all subject areas at the pre-primary and primary levels;
- Gender stereotypes exist in subject selection and courses of study at the secondary level;
- Female students have higher levels of achievement in academic subjects, particularly those in arts and languages, business subjects, theatre arts, food and nutrition, and home economics, but male students outperform female ones in mathematics, integrated sciences, information technology, and the traditionally male-dominated vocational-technical subjects;

30. *Ibid.* p37.

31. *Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica*, 2003; Planning Institute of Jamaica.

- Significantly more females than males in the teaching profession, especially at the primary level (88.0%)³¹ with more females represented at the MOEY&C policymaking levels; and
- Higher male representation among principals at the secondary level and among heads, lecturers, senior lecturers, and heads of faculties in the University of the West Indies and other institutions at the university level.

BEYOND SCHOOL: LABOR MARKET TRENDS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

The fact that females are doing better than males in particular aspects of the education system does not guarantee them a better life outcome beyond school, especially in employment and income. The Jamaican labor force consistently shows significantly higher rates of employment for males than for females. While female unemployment is higher, women have a significantly higher job-seeking rate than do men—more women than men look for work but more men than women find work. Men have greater advantage in the labor force despite lower levels of academic achievement than women. Additionally, perhaps because of the higher levels of technical skills men are able to acquire, the array of occupational choices considered to be “men’s work” is wide. See Table 5 for a breakdown of employment, unemployment, and job-seeking rates.

As demonstrated in Table 6, in almost all categories of work, men earn more than women in the private sector.

In keeping with the gender stereotypes in subject and vocational choices of males and females in the educational system, the labor

Men have greater advantage in the labor force despite lower levels of academic achievement than women.

Table 5: Labor Force Participation, Employment and Unemployment Rate by Sex (April 2001-April 2003)

Male-Female/Year	April 2001	April 2002	April 2003
Males			
Labor force as a %			
of population	48.6	48.6	47.4
Employment Rate	89.7	89.5	90.2
Unemployment Rate	10.3	10.5	9.8
Job-Seeking Rate	3.8	5.0	4.8
Females			
Labor Force as a %			
of Total Population	36.4	38.1	36.1
Employment Rate	79.5	79.8	82.9
Unemployment Rate	20.5	20.2	17.1
Job-Seeking Rate	8.5	8.2	7.8

While males and females have innate differences, influencing factors from children’s social environments likely have a more profound impact on their life outcomes than do biological and cognitive differences.

market reflects a very traditional division of occupations. Data from the Labor Force Survey of 2002 indicate that males dominate the labor force in the following industry areas: agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining, quarrying and refining, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water; construction and installation, transport, storage and communications. Females dominate in wholesale and retail; hotels and restaurant services; financing, insurance, real estate and business services; and community, social, and personal services.

These deeply entrenched gender stereotypes act as incentives and disincentives to boys and girls. Clearly, they have an impact on their expectations, choices, actions, and results.

32. At the time of this writing, 1USD=61.84330JMD.

33. This may reflect a ‘middle management’ level which is increasingly dominated by females.

34. *Gender and School Achievement in the Caribbean*; Peter Kutnick, Vena Jules and Anthony Layne; Department For International Development (DFID) Education Research, Serial No. 21, November 1997.

35. Errol Miller: *Marginalization of the Black Jamaican Male*; Kingston Publishers 1986 and *Men At Risk*; Kingston; Jamaica Publishing House Ltd. 1991.

36. *What We Sow and What We Reap; Problems in the Cultivation of Male Identity in Jamaica*; Grace Kennedy Foundation Lecture Series 1999.

RESEARCH ON GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Some argue that male and female students perform differently in education because of sex differences in maturation rates and learning styles. While males and females have innate differences, influencing factors from children’s social environments likely have a more profound impact on their life outcomes than do biological and cognitive differences.

According to a UK Department for International Development (DFID) report, “within recent years, explorations into sex and gender differences in academic achievement have become more frequent. Explanations for ... differences between boys and girls have moved away from biological theories into psycho-social insights concerning patterns of socialization and differential experiences offered to males and females, especially the experiences offered by the family home and the organization/interactions at the school.”³⁴

Errol Miller’s theory of male marginalization³⁵ has had a strong influence on the debate about male underachievement in education. Chevannes³⁶ traces the development in Miller’s

Table 6: Salary Distribution by Sex In Private Sector Organizations (1995)

Salaries (in JMD) ³²	Female (%)	Male (%)
Less than \$150,000	80	20
150,000–250,000	72	28
251,000–350,000	52	48
351,000–450,000	33	67
451,000–550,000	32	68
551,000–750,000	52 ³³	48
751,000–1,000,000	33	67
1,001,000–1,500,000	21	79
1,501,000–2,000,000	12	88
Over 2,000,000	0	100

theory. He identifies the feminization of the teaching profession as a deliberate policy on the part of the colonial administration and the white elite to “clip the wings” of black men and prevent them from posing a challenge to white rule. They suggest that one’s place in society is determined by attributes such as race, class, gender, age, and the like and that those who hold the central places of power in the post-colonial Caribbean states distribute the rest of the population in a queue as a way of holding on to power. Women have been moved up the queue both as a concession to their demands and as a buffer between the ruling elite and the majority of black males.

Yet, both Chevannes and, to a greater extent, Figueroa³⁷ identify the root cause of male underachievement as being related to unintended outcomes of male socialization and gender privileging. Figueroa states as his premise that “historically, the male gender has been privileged in Caribbean Society.... The male gender has occupied a wider social space, controlled more resources, maintained a higher social position, and exercised greater power.”

This historic privileging, Figueroa suggests, has “constructed maleness as dominant, appropriate to the public sphere, technologically capable, strong, and hard. Femaleness has been constructed as submissive, appropriate to the private sphere, sensitive, caring, and in need of protection.” These values, he says, “are not only internalized by children themselves, but also structure their worlds of home, school, community, and work.”

Figueroa draws on the work of other researchers and writers on the subject (W. Bailey, B. Bailey, Brown and Chevannes, Evans, Parry, Lindsay, and Leo-Rhynie) to outline a comprehensive set of issues having

impacts on male underachievement. His findings, reinforced by research activity through the results of focus-group discussions, field inquiry, and a literature review, can be summarized as follows:

- Early childhood socialization better prepares girls for the type of schooling common in the Caribbean. Girls are more confined to the house, under greater adult supervision, given more responsibility, expected to be disciplined, taught to please others, and involved in doing uninteresting and repetitive tasks;
- The match between female gender identities and the educational system has grown while the mismatch between male gender identities and the educational system has grown. The loss of rural male chores has not been replaced by a comparable involvement in domesticity. There is a persistently strong view that men should discipline boys despite the fact that 42 percent of households are headed by women and that women dominate in teaching. Further, while outside, boys are less subject to community control; thus, the skills they acquire and the role models they meet on the street and in the media are different from those required for school success;
- The expectation that boys will be “bad” results in their facing negative reinforcement at home and school. This expectation, along with that of their being “tough,” results in their being punished more severely and more often;
- The “hard” male image contributes to resistance to school, particularly those aspects seen as girlish (including the use of English versus Creole and slang) and which call sexual orientation into question;

Social scientists have identified the root cause of male underachievement as being related to unintended outcomes of male socialization and gender privileging.

37. *Making Sense of Male Experience; The Case of Academic Underachievement in the English-Speaking Caribbean*; Mark Figueroa; IDS Bulletin Vol 31. No. 2 2000; University of East Anglia, UK.

One national journal posits, “With the exception of all-age schools, the current enrollment exceeds capacity at all school types.”

- Girls are expected to apply themselves to schoolwork more than boys. They receive more positive encouragement and help with homework and more admonition to “take up their books”;
- Streaming in the school system creates a kind of homogenization of achievement levels across the various types of schools. As boys fall behind, they become over-represented in the lower streams. Such streaming has had a negative effect on all students;
- There is a class bias in the system, with higher expectations of performance among students of the upper classes who typically attend traditional high schools. Among this group, high achievement is consistent with a traditional male image. Boys who do well, especially in the male-oriented subjects, are not as vulnerable to this bias. These boys usually start their education in preparatory schools where gender achievement is less skewed;
- The ideology of differences in male and female roles, responsibilities, and occupational choices is deeply entrenched. The research indicates that, even at a young age, students have clear views on what types of subjects are appropriate for their sex and which careers they can pursue. Girls more easily break out of the gender stereotypes than do boys, as “male” occupations have higher status than traditionally “female” ones. Additionally, male sexual identity is more likely to be questioned when a boy chooses a non-traditional course of study; and
- Females’ upward social mobility is more closely tied to educational attainment than that of males’. For males, schooling is less significant in terms of increasing their earning power, as there are more opportunities for men to find employment

even with limited education. Men also have greater access to informal and illegal sources of income. Since male identity is in large part tied to the ability to be a “provider,” there is a stronger social demand on males for earning an income, which doesn’t necessarily require an education.

The factors outlined above in the research, as well as those related to data gleaned from schools, including variations in schools’ resources, socio-economic status of families and communities, the impact of school leadership, the nature of the curricula, teaching methods and teacher competencies—were all echoed in the findings of this fieldwork.

SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

This snapshot of the Jamaican educational system and the available data indicate major challenges and find significant weaknesses in quality, equity, and access that will continue to prevent boys, in particular, from achieving, and all boys and girls from attaining acceptable performance and outcomes, unless they are addressed soon. Six major challenges have been identified in the research, the data from the education system, and this study.

ENROLLMENT EXCEEDING SCHOOL CAPACITY

This issue alone imposes serious limitations and consequences on the quality of education in schools and results in problems of discipline, frustration among teachers and students, stressful or lacking instructional arrangements, and difficult classroom management—certainly it is among the factors contributing to violence in some Jamaican schools. One national journal posits, “With the exception of all-age schools, the current enrollment exceeds capacity at all school types.”³⁸ Primary school enrollment

38. PIOJ, *The Jamaican Child*, 2002, p32.

exceeds capacity by 23 percent; technical and secondary schools exceed their capacity by 50 percent; primary and junior high school enrollment exceeds their capacity by 55 percent; and infant schools exceed their capacity by 25 percent. This calls into question the adequacy of the GOJs' 2003 school building project of 16 new schools.

LOW LITERACY RATE NATIONALLY

Nationwide, a low literacy rate continues, with the problem being more pronounced for boys at the primary level. Currently, illiteracy is identified at grade 4, and attempts to correct the problem at such a high level seem to be acting “after the horse has gone through the gate.” The outcomes of Grade 1 Readiness Inventory and the Grade 3 Diagnostic Assessment indicate the reasons for this grave concern, and the country lacks comprehensive strategies to address this issue. However, in 2004, the GOJ began placing greater emphasis on early childhood education (3 to 5 years). This is strategically an effective measure, as the data and research have shown that the investment pays off in the long run.

TOO FEW STUDENTS ENROLLING AND ACHIEVING IN THE CXC EXAM

Too few male and female students enroll and achieve in the CXC exam. Only 34.6 percent of students in secondary school terminal grades sat four or more CXC subjects in 2003. Overall, 77 percent of the cohort sat the examination in 2003 compared to 70.8 percent in 2002. In the 2003 sitting, some 46.1 percent of the cohort sat mathematics and 55.8 percent sat English Language. This low sitting occurred despite the fact that GOJ covered the cost of the examination.

VERY LOW PERFORMANCE RATE IN UPGRADED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The pass rate in mathematics in traditional high schools is 51 percent compared to 17 percent for the upgraded secondary schools and in English language is 65 percent compared to 27 percent. The pattern is the same for prior years. This is similar to the World Bank's observation,³⁹ which categorized secondary high schools in Jamaica from the most to the least prestigious. The most prestigious are the secondary high schools, which emphasize academic subjects; followed by the technical highs, comprehensives (mixed academic and vocational); the new secondary (pre-vocational); primary; and junior highs and all-age schools (which offer grades 7 through 9 in their secondary sections).

LACK OF ADEQUATE TEACHER TRAINING

Schools continue to have too many teachers who are pre-trained or untrained.⁴⁰ Student performance correlates to the quality of instruction in schools—better teachers mean higher-achieving students, so one means to develop and maintain quality education is to have well-trained and qualified teachers. There was a 17 percent decline in the number of untrained teachers and a 22 percent increase in the number of graduates in primary and secondary schools in 2003 (ESSJ). However, 2003 saw 13 percent untrained teachers in primary schools in 2003 and 21 percent pre-trained or untrained teachers in secondary schools. Overseas employment of Jamaican teachers has an impact on the situation, with some 2,000 teachers being employed in the United Kingdom and the United States over the past three years. Nonetheless, efforts of the

Student performance correlates to the quality of instruction in schools—better teachers mean higher-achieving students, so one means to develop and maintain quality education is to have well-trained and qualified teachers.

39. World Bank. (1998). *A Study of Secondary Education in Jamaica: Improving Quality and Expanding Access*. World Bank, Washington D.C.

40. See ESSJ, sec. 22.11 for definitions of pre-trained and untrained teachers. The untrained teacher has a Secondary School Certificate only; the pre-trained has a degree but not a teaching certification.

MOEY&C and the Jamaica Teachers Association to improve the quality of teachers seem to be reaping benefits as the number of trained university graduates in the system grew by 16 percent in 2003 (ESSJ, 2003).

HIGH RATE OF ABSENTEEISM

The system continues to be plagued by an exceedingly high rate of absenteeism in school. The average daily absence for schools in Jamaica is 21.75 percent (ESSJ, sec 22.7). The absence rate for primary schools is 19.8 percent, for all-age schools is 25 percent, and for junior high schools is 23.1 percent. Girls have a lower rate of absence than do boys in all schools types. This has been the pattern for years with limited fluctuations either ways.

Absenteeism in secondary schools is at an average daily rate of 22.6 percent, with the lowest rate of (15.7%) being for girls in technical high schools. This rate increases

progressively through secondary and junior high schools to a high of 32 percent in all-age schools. Boys have the lowest rate of 16.9 percent absence in technical high schools and increases similar to that of girls to a high of 37.1 percent in all-age schools.

The major reason students gave for being absent from school over the years and in 2002 were “money problems” (JSLC, sec. 3.7), and this study echoes that finding. Money problems occur disproportionately with the poor, and their access to the system is thus similarly skewed. The JSLC reports (2002) that 38.6 percent of the poorest quintile in their survey stayed away from school because of financial hardship, compared to only 6.9 percent of the wealthiest quintile.

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FINDINGS

The findings presented in this section are drawn from the nine focus-group discussions, the research on gender and education, and the data reviewed.

Additionally, the discussion takes account of the findings and recommendations from the TFER. The TFER was appointed by the Prime Minister of Jamaica in February 2004 to propose reforms to the Jamaican education system that were consistent with “a vision for the creation of a world-class education system which will generate the human capital and produce the skills necessary for the Jamaican citizen to compete in the global economy.” The Task Force completed its report in September 2004 and its findings became available to the public in December 2004.

The findings are discussed under the broad headings: (i) Positive Accomplishments in the Education System, (ii) Overall Issues in the System; (iii) Gender-Related Issues in the Teaching and Learning Environment; and (iv) Effects of Gender Roles on Boys and Girls.

POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Some positive things have taken place in the Jamaican Education System over the decade of the nineties, as enunciated by the education and donor/lender focus groups and carried in the report of the TFER. These include:

- Revised curricula and national assessment programs at the primary and secondary levels of the education system;

- The introduction of universal secondary education with the exodus of the Common Entrance Examination and the advent of the Grade Six Achievement Test;
- Initiation of the Grade Four Literacy Test to stem the practice of automatically promoting children with very low literacy skills to the higher grades;
- Provision of a wider range of technical opportunities, especially through the HEART/NTA;
- Increased partnership with the private sector, which, according to the TFER, resulted in “a capital investment in education worth over 200-billion dollars at replacement value;”
- Convergence of the ruling and opposition parties in the House of Representatives in October 2003 in a unanimous commitment to increase significantly the allocations to public education over the next five years;
- The establishment of a shared Vision for Education in Jamaica in 2004 through a process of nationwide consultation, which states that:

“Each learner will maximize his/her potential in an enriching, learner-centered education environment with maximum use of learning technologies supported by committed, qualified, competent, effective, and professional educators and staff.”

The Task Force on Education Reform was appointed by the Prime Minister of Jamaica in February 2004 to propose reforms to the Jamaican education system that were consistent with “a vision for the creation of a world-class education system which will generate the human capital and produce the skills necessary for the Jamaican citizen to compete in the global economy.”

According to the TFER report, “...the most pressing issue is the chronic underachievement of the system in terms of the large number of students performing below their grade level.”

“The education system will be equitable and accessible with full attendance to Grade 11. Accountability, transparency and performance are the hallmarks of a system that is excellent, self-sustaining and resourced and welcomes full stakeholder participation. The system produces full literacy and numeracy, a globally competitive, quality workforce, and a disciplined, culturally aware and ethical Jamaican citizenry.”

- The establishment of an all-embracing Education Goal that promises: “an education which facilitates life-long learning and acquisition of social and life skills for all.”

AT-RISK PROGRAMS

In addition to the positive happenings noted above, the principals, teachers, and students involved in the New Horizon for Primary School and the Uplifting Adolescent Projects had high praise for both. These programs were designed and developed with the perspective that students and parents were integral to, and key participants in, both the design and implementation of the programs. These programs were based on the needs of the whole person: Children were involved in the focus and the communication sessions, and the students expressed their views on subjects and course content. Counseling and relationship building between students and adults were key components to the success of these programs. In the two at-risks programs observed, participants reported that neither boys nor girls were beaten or treated harshly. Key to these programs was a focus on learning rather than teaching.

OVERALL ISSUES IN THE SYSTEM

LOW LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The study shows an education system that has been failing across all groups irrespective of school type. This is reflected in an unacceptably low level of academic achievement among both boys and girls at various grade levels in all types of schools. The TFER report supports this finding with the submission that “...the most pressing issue is the chronic underachievement of the system in terms of the large number of students performing below their grade level.” In this context, the consensus among all concerned is that the abysmally low level of literacy, which persists throughout primary schools and into the secondary levels of the system, is the number-one issue to be addressed. Describing this phenomenon, the TFER states: “The fact that about one in every two primary school leavers is considered illiterate is alarming.”

WEAKNESSES IN TEACHING OF READING

One major issue relating to literacy, which kept recurring in the teachers’ focus groups and in discussions with school principals, is that teachers find it difficult to teach reading under the new integrated primary school curriculum. Additionally, the schools have limited facilities/provisions for undertaking remedial reading and have difficulty convincing the MOEY&C of the need for additional resources in this respect.

MULTIPLE PROBLEMS IMPACTING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Apart from the low literacy levels, the study also indicated five major challenges (at item 7 in the body of the report) that have negative impacts on the education system and compromise both the ability of teachers to teach and the potential of boys and girls to learn. These include:

- Enrollment exceeding school capacity at all levels of the system (except for all-age schools) from a low of 23 percent to a high of 55 percent. A related issue here is the large class sizes, which are much higher than that of many other countries in the Caribbean;
- Very limited numbers of the eligible cohort (34.6% of the terminal grade) being enrolled and achieving in the CXC examinations;
- Extremely low performance of upgraded secondary schools compared to traditional high schools;
- Too many pre-trained or untrained teachers in the education system, that is, approximately 13 percent at the primary and 21 percent at the secondary level; and
- High rates of absenteeism from school with increasingly higher rates for boys at the higher levels of the system.

VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

According to feedback from members of the various focus groups, violence in schools and households and communities is a serious issue for education. Educators lamented the many cases of students carrying weapons to school either to attack other students or to defend themselves. They also expressed concern at the level of physical attacks of students on teachers. They expressed strong concern that the pervasiveness of violence in society, the home, and the media and the overall

masculinized culture all contribute to children's perceptions of themselves, to their life prospects and goals, and to sustaining gender inequalities.

GENDER-RELATED ISSUES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING SITUATION

INSENSITIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Many of the children, especially those from inner-city communities, described a humiliating environment in which children are stigmatized based on the poor, violence-ridden communities in which they live and on their inability to read. They reported insensitive remarks by teachers who delivered telling blows to children's egos and contributed to their lack of energy and enthusiasm to participate in and attend school.

LIMITED TEACHER UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER ISSUES

The study found that teachers had limited understanding of the impact of gender dynamics on educational achievement and outcomes. The focus group participants—both teachers and educational experts—reported that teachers had limited understanding, knowledge, and training related to boys' and girls' emotional needs.

REPRESENTATION OF BOYS AND GIRLS

The data shows that, while boys and girls have low achievement and attendance levels, boys lag behind girls in almost all areas. There is a very disproportionate representation of boys compared to girls among children who perform below grade levels in almost all school types and examinations. The exception

The focus group participants—both teachers and educational experts—reported that teachers had limited understanding, knowledge, and training related to boys' and girls' emotional needs.

The study found that parents, teachers and children hold strong, traditional, gender-stereotypical ideas of the roles, responsibilities, choices, and life outcomes for males and females.

where boys perform better than girls is at the CXC examination in mathematics and science and in certain vocational areas.

Girls outstrip boys in school attendance at all levels of the system, and the presence of boys diminishes disproportionately to that of girls as children move from primary school to higher levels of the system. Given that being present is a pre-requisite to access, boys' absenteeism places them at a serious disadvantage relative to the benefits of the education system.

The question was posed to focus groups as to why boys in particular drop out of school. Participant responses included the following: shifting households, the challenges in the formal education system, literacy problems, the pull of get-rich-quick images as portrayed by popular "heroes" and other males in their environment. They also pointed to the differential expectations and treatment of boys and girls in the homes and schools, playing into stereotypes as described in the following section. In response to poverty-related issues of lack of school uniforms, books, and the like and in the context of societal expectation that males are to be providers/breadwinners, boys are absent from school or drop-out in search of income and employment.

EFFECT OF GENDER ROLES ON BOYS AND GIRLS

The study found that parents, teachers and children hold strong, traditional, gender-stereotypical ideas of the roles, responsibilities, choices, and life outcomes for males and females. These ideas inform child-rearing patterns, expectations of and responses to boys and girls in the teaching and learning environment, and become "self-fulfilling prophecies" that are reinforced and perpetuated. The concern lies in that these traditional gender-socialization messages contribute negatively to boys' and girls'

educational achievement. Some discussants said that girls perform more favorably in prevailing (traditional) classrooms because they are conditioned to follow directions, sit nicely in their chairs, and listen to the teachers. Boys, on the other hand, are expected to misbehave, are severely reprimanded and humiliated, skip school or drop out completely, and have low self-esteem.

BOYS

The responses from parents and teachers and the children themselves showed clear gender messages and expectations for boys. Overall, the view was that boys had to be tough, should have more freedom, and were not expected to have high academic achievements.

The boys themselves internalized and accepted that certain roles and treatment were in keeping with them being boys. They responded to the question of what it meant to be a boy with answers such as: "being hard and strong," "being a hero," "being tough." and "having more responsibility."

We will recall that Figueroa indicated in his findings that being labeled as "bad" meant negative reinforcement for boys at home and at school, just as being labeled as "tough" meant, "being punished more severely and more often."

Boys in the focus groups reported being on the receiving end of harsh physical and verbal treatment by parents, teachers, and other adults. A consensus among the focus groups was that boys were usually punished more often and harder than were girls. However, boys definitely do not like this part of being a boy. According to some of the boys, "teachers look down on us and treat us like we are bad." From other boys we heard statements like: "teachers make us kneel in the sun" and "kneel and get licks." "Society treats you tough like we don't have emotions," remarked a young boy in a rural school.

All focus groups, including the boys themselves, reported that boys wear the label of being lazy and not attentive to study. They indicate that this results in low self-esteem, low academic achievement, dismal test results, low literacy levels, being streamed into remedial classes, and continuing to fall behind girls academically.

GIRLS

The study also found clear stereotypical gender socialization patterns and expectations for females. Study findings correlate positively with Figueroa's notion of "male privileging" where females are seen and treated as "weak, submissive, suited to the private sphere, sensitive, caring, and in need of protection." Gender expectations and roles, echoed throughout the focus groups, were expressed in such messages as: "girls know they are special"; "girls have more self-esteem"; "more is expected from girls"; "girls take up their books"; "girls are dainty"; "girls are sensitive, respectful, and kind"; "girls are treated better

than the boys by parents and teachers"; and "girls are not expected to be breadwinners."

All focus-group participants reported that girls get more encouragement, support, and help with homework. At first glance, it would seem that conditions for girls were more or less better than for the boys. However, as Figueroa suggests, girls are prepared and expected to conform to a culture that restricts them to the private sphere. A student focus groups reported that girls have significantly more household responsibilities from an early age than do their male counterparts. Further, girls reported being more restricted in their movements than boys are. Also, all girls' focus groups shared the persistent complaint of male harassment and of not feeling safe on the streets. Comments included: "girls fit better," "girls are inside cleaning house," "girls are held tight," "girls are given more responsibility," "girls do more homework," and "girls have babies."

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are geared toward maximizing resources and avoiding overlap by building on prior and current achievements in Jamaica's education sector and creating synergies with other efforts in the sector. In this vein, we endorse the recommendations of the TFER under the headings of Government and Management, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Support, Stakeholder Participation, and Finance, along with TFER's recommendation for the promotion of synergies.

The following specific recommendations emerged from the assessment.

We strongly recommend, based on the findings of the research, that USAID should continue to develop and implement programs in the education sector under SO 4 and with the IRs indicated below, but with adjustments to focus on the specific needs of boys and girls as outlined below.

Strategic Objective 4 (SO 4): Increasing Literacy and Numeracy among Targeted Jamaican Youth

- IR: 1 Improved Quality of Teaching
- IR2: Increased School Attendance
- IR3: Improved Management of Schools
- IR4.4: Number of NGOs Delivering Services to At-Risk Youth

MAINSTREAM GENDER IN USAID STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR EDUCATION

Mechanisms are needed to mainstream gender specific analysis and interventions into USAID/Jamaica's Strategic Objectives to move toward addressing the particular concerns of both boys and girls in education. Much concern is being expressed in various quarters in Jamaica, about the education system in general and male underachievement in particular. One possible outcome of the discussions is a move towards interventions that improve the performance of males and ignore the needs of females. The findings of this assessment suggest that achieving "best practice" will depend on a strategy that is informed by analyses of, and interventions to meet, the needs of both groups of learners.

USAID/Jamaica should position itself to play a leadership role in addressing boys' needs, without compromising the educational needs of girls, by recognizing and taking a gender-equality approach to its planned interventions. The new strategy should emphasize community partnerships and linkages as well as synergies with other strategic interventions.

A set of gender-mainstreaming strategies should be developed for inclusion in the design of programs in SO 12 of USAID/Jamaica's new strategy 2005–2009 (532-012). Moreover, the language and design of the Education Results Framework should incorporate a gender-equality perspective. In particular, USAID/Jamaica may wish to consider the inclusion of a gender-specific Intermediate Result with supporting

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indicators. This would entail including objectives, outputs, and activities that focus expressly on the promotion of gender equality in the design of USAID/Jamaica's education projects. The design would also present appropriate indicators to measure progress and impact in the implementation of these gender-based activities.

DEVELOP AND/OR SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER TRAINING MODULES

This study found that parents, teachers, principals, and students hold traditional views on the roles, expected behaviors, and responsibilities of males and females and that these views influence their actions, interactions, and relationships in ways that perpetuate inequitable, gender-specific outcomes. Therefore, a major recommendation is for an intervention that can:

- Provide information on gender socialization and its impact on males and females and thus increase awareness of gender dynamics among parents, teachers, principals, and students;
- Sensitize parents and educators to the need for and strategies to achieve equitable and fair treatment of boys and girls in both home and school settings;
- Provide technical assistance to schools to enable them to incorporate gender analysis in their School Development Planning process and to develop strategies that address the confidence and self-esteem of both boys and girls and improve their achievement in traditional and non-traditional subjects; and
- Sensitize students to gender issues through the schools' life skills curricula and other existing programs; provide students with an opportunity to make choices that are not

based on traditional gender stereotypes; and improve gender relations among students and enable them to learn and express themselves in both single-sex and co-educational settings.

BUILD CAPACITY OF EDUCATORS TO CREATE CHILD-CENTERED CLASSROOMS

This study recommends building schools' capacity to encourage and implement child-centered classrooms. While too-large class sizes often compromise an optimal learning environment, teachers also need help in identifying and implementing strategies to meet students' needs and enliven the learning experience. During this research, the team visited schools, such as the St. Peter Claver Primary School, that are working toward this goal despite difficult social and environmental circumstances. The efforts of such schools need to be documented, supported, publicized, and generalized with appropriate adaptations to suit different contexts.

EXPAND INTERVENTIONS WITH A FOCUS ON LITERACY

The USAID/Jamaica-funded project, New Horizons for Primary Schools, and the recently completed DFID-funded Jamaica All-Age Schools Project, have strong literacy strategies that need to be more widely disseminated among teachers. This study indicates the critical need to continue the focus on improving literacy, with greater emphasis on the early childhood years and primary grades 1 through 4. This focus, linked to the gender training module, would emphasize the importance of reading and literacy as a life skill for both boys and girls. Given the existing low levels of literacy, USAID may wish to support the recommendation of the TFER for the implementation of a remedial literacy program.

BUILD ON SUCCESSFUL AT-RISK PROGRAMS

The study recommends continuing support for at-risk programs. Two programs, the New Horizons for Primary Schools Project and the Uplifting Adolescents Project, have existing mechanisms of counseling, group discussion, and decision-making. They address the needs of poor-performing students, youths at risk of dropping out of school, and others who have already dropped out of school. These programs should incorporate modules for gender equality training, aimed at fostering positive and supportive relationships, into their HIV/AIDS, health and/or family life education curricula.

SUPPORT NATIONAL FORA

With the publication and presentation to the Parliament of the findings and recommendations of the TFER, an important next step will be the facilitation of public education and discussion on the recommendations that are advocating a radical overhaul of the system. Gender equity in education is a necessary and important component of such an overhaul. How this is to be achieved is a matter of debate currently in Jamaica, but is not explicitly addressed in the report of the Task Force. USAID could therefore make a valuable contribution to the national discussion and decision-making by supporting national fora of stakeholders to:

- Become informed about the recommendations of the Task Force, and, in that context, the analysis, findings, and recommendations of this report; and
- Discuss, debate, and form understanding and consensus on the best strategies for achieving gender equality in education as part of the recommended overhaul of the system.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS TO STRENGTHEN STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

The MOEY&C has implemented projects aimed at increasing community involvement in the development of schools, however these projects do not seem to have extended beyond the pilot phase despite demonstrated effectiveness. USAID should assist the MOEY&C to review those models (such as the SCOPE project, the Adopt-A-School Programme, and the like) with a view to reintroducing and/or expanding the relevant, successful components throughout the education system.

SUPPORT GENDER-SENSITIVE CURRICULUM REVIEW/REFORM

The MOEY&C has ongoing programs for curriculum reform, and the HEART/NTA takes part in strengthening technical high school curricula. USAID could add value to these efforts by providing support for activities aimed at achieving gender-balanced curricula, with strategies for achieving equitable representation of boys and girls in all areas. This goal would necessitate targeted outreach to students to increase enrollment in non-traditional courses of study.

PROMOTE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

On visits to schools, the researchers observed that a critical factor in the performance of principals and teachers was their vision and sense of mission. Collaboration among principals and teachers to create a challenging and supportive learning environment; clear, fair, and consistently applied rules; and a pattern of including all stakeholders—educators, students, and parents—in the decision-making process and holding them accountable for “doing their part” consistently resulted in better student outcomes. This held true even when compared to other schools in

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One strategy to help increase the number of male teachers without compromising equity in the profession would be a targeted promotional/publicity campaign highlighting the benefits of teaching as a career option for males.

similar settings with poor outcomes. This study recommends transformational leadership training—not to be confused with management training—for principals and other staff members. Research reveals that effective leadership is key to change and reform in schools. Further, the far-reaching recommendations of the Task Force on Education will demand a new, visionary type of school leadership to be implemented successfully. As part of the process of transforming leadership and the culture of schools, we recommend giving support to sustaining and expanding the “Change from Within” Programme so that it has system-wide implementation.

STRENGTHEN OVERALL TEACHER TRAINING

We propose the development and strengthening of pre-service and in-service training curricula that address child-centered learning environments, teaching of reading in the integrated curriculum at the primary level, and gender sensitization. This could be achieved in collaboration with activities already underway, for example, with teachers participating in the CETT program. In particular, existing USAID projects should integrate gender sensitization training modules into all teacher-training activities and should support the efforts of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of West Indies, to develop and implement such modules for use in teachers’ colleges.

SUPPORT MOEY&C EFFORTS TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN MALE TEACHERS

To respond directly to the dearth of male teachers and role models across the education system, we recommend that the MOEY&C implement special measures for recruiting more male teachers. Our field research found that, while female teachers agreed with the

need for more male teachers and role models, they were adamant that their recruitment should not be on a basis that creates inequities in remuneration and other conditions of work for male and female teachers. One strategy to help increase the number of male teachers without compromising equity in the profession would be a targeted promotional/publicity campaign highlighting the benefits of teaching as a career option for males. USAID should consider hosting consultations with the MOEY&C and relevant stakeholders to examine the feasibility of a publicity campaign aimed at sensitizing males to the impact they could have on children’s future as positive role models. Current male teachers could be highlighted and used as spokespersons. Such a campaign would contribute to a positive step forward in dispelling myths that education is not “macho” and may help make schooling more attractive for male learners.

SUPPORT A NATIONAL MENTORSHIP FOR STUDENTS PROGRAM

Existing USAID partners, such as Youth Opportunities Unlimited, have a strong track record in the implementation of mentoring programs. A special thrust to recruit male mentors and to provide both male and female mentors with gender-sensitivity training could have positive impacts on boys’ and girls’ self-esteem, motivation, and performance.

STRENGTHEN USAID’S EVALUATION PROCEDURES

As in the current SO, USAID should continue to focus on developing and strengthening evaluation mechanisms in order to gauge what works and what should be improved with respect to gender-related and other indicators in education.

FOSTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEVELS

Building on existing national networks and expertise, opportunities for district- and community-level educators and administrators should be created. Further, support for collaboration between NGOs and other implementers at the community level would contribute to building local capacity.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that:

- Gender stereotypes influence teaching methods, curricular content, and classroom interactions among students and between students and teachers, and
- Gender dynamics significantly drive and influence expectations and outcomes for boys and girls at home, the school, and the workplace.

The research reviewed, conducted, and analyzed for this study clearly shows that boys will more likely experience educational failure than girls will, but that a significant percentage of girls do not fare much better. Contrary to popular belief that girls succeed

at the expense of boys, the findings of this study indicate that a high proportion of male and female students fail to meet or exceed academic expectations. In many ways, therefore, the debate about whether boys or girls are most disadvantaged in Jamaican schools masks the reality that most schools provide poor education for both.

These findings beg an immediate response. USAID/Jamaica can play a key role in helping to redress the negative gender dynamics in schooling so that boys and girls have equal opportunity to achieve their fullest potential.

The ultimate objective of educational reform in Jamaica should be to improve the quality of the education system and raise the bar for all students—to the benefit of all learners, both male and female. The findings of this study, with respect to gender equality in the education system in Jamaica, suggest the need for interventions that can produce a teaching-learning environment that meets the needs of all male and female children, including at-risk youths. Interventions should also broadly mobilize stakeholders at every level, but especially in the school communities, to build a critical mass of support and leadership for change in education.

The ultimate objective of educational reform in Jamaica should be to improve the quality of the education system and raise the bar for all students—to the benefit of all learners, both male and female.

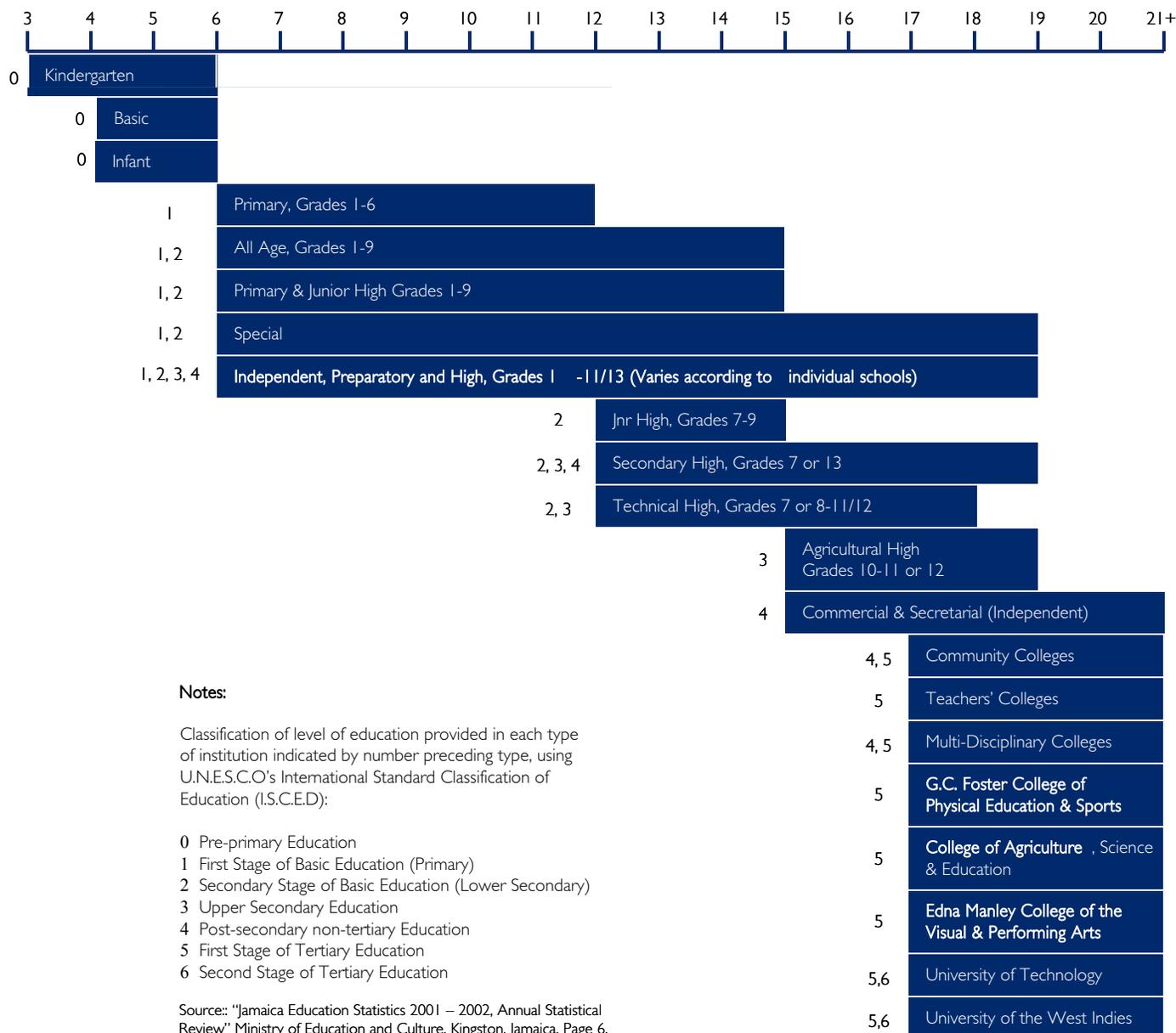
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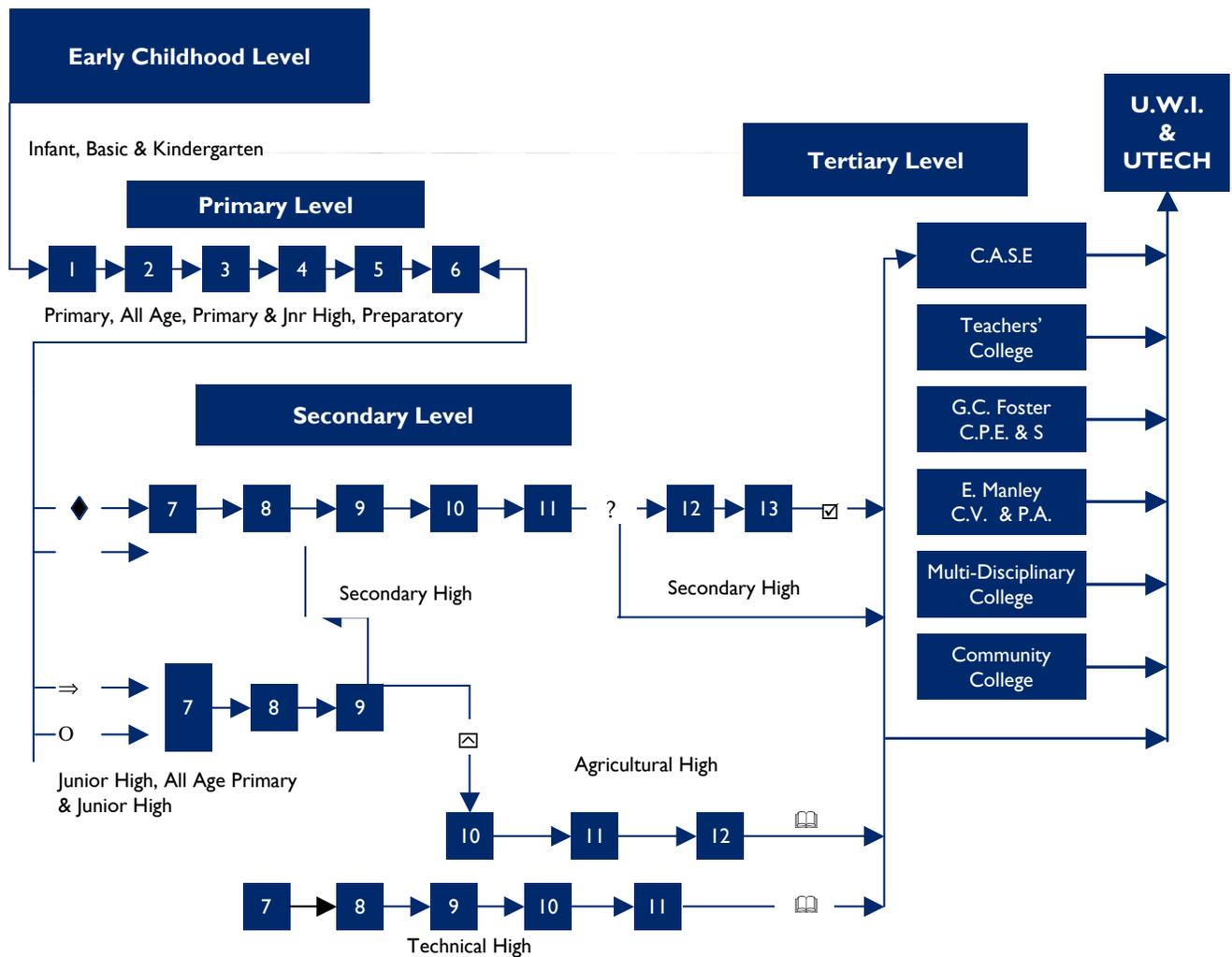
ANNEX I: THE FORMAL PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN JAMAICA: ORGANIZATION CHART

AGE BY SINGLE YEAR



ANNEX II: FLOW CHART OF THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

UWI & UTECH PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND TERTIARY LEVELS



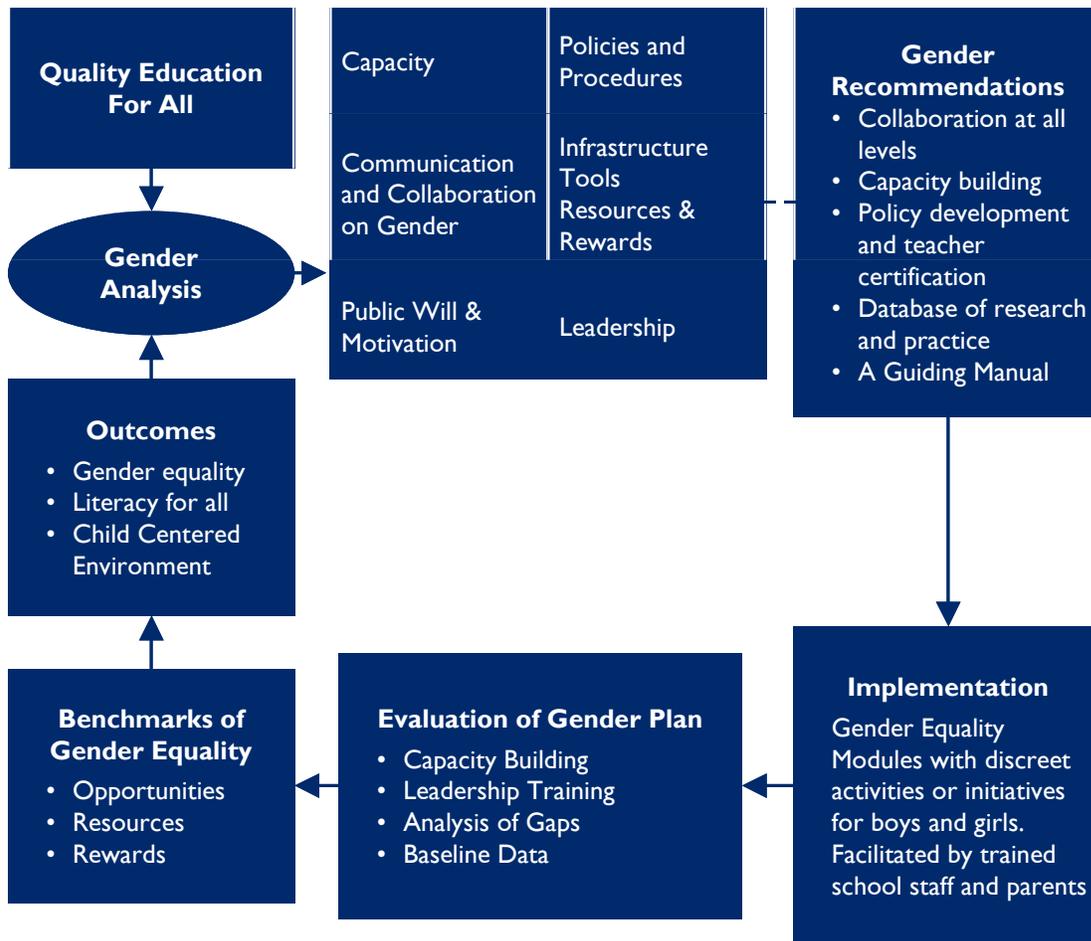
- ◆ Principal's Discretion
- Grade Six Achievement Test (G.S.A.T. 11+)
- Grade 9 Achievement Test (G.N.A.T: 13+) / Junior High School Certificate Exam
- Common Entrance Examination (C.E.E. 13+)
- ? G.C.E "O" Level
- φ Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C)
- 📖 Caribbean Examinations Council (C.X.C)
- ☑ G.C.E. "A" Levels / C.A.P.E.
- ☒ Vocational Examination
- ⇒ Free Flow

ANNEX III: EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAMS (1993–2007)

Programs	Target Group	Focus	Funding Level	Funding Agency	Duration
Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP)	Grades 1 to 6 Primary & All-Age schools	Language Arts Curriculum review, National Assessment Programme development, Schools Library & Civil Works	US\$28.0M.	NDF, OPEC,USAID, GOJ	Sept 1993 to Sept 1999
Income Generating Project	Primary & Secondary Schools	Income Generation as revolving fund; equipment purchase or refurbishing	J\$ 11.0 M	MOEY&C	Ongoing
Technical & Vocational Education & Training Rationalization Project	Jose Marti Technical High School (Pilot)	Curriculum revision, Improved Machinery and equipment for practical training, Computer Aided Design (CAD)	J\$37,940,000	Japan Intern. Corp. Agency & GOJ	May 1997 To June 2002 (5 years)
Technical High School Development Project	Secondary Schools Grades 10 & 11	Develop profiles for 16 schools Recommend school clusters Optimal mix of vocational subjects per school & cost estimates for tools and equipment	US\$5.6 M	MOEY&C and HEART/NTA	Oct. 1997 To Oct. 2001 (3 years)
Child Health Education & Development Project (CHED)	440 Primary schools Grades 1 to 6 all parishes	Infusion of healthy living lessons in primary school curriculum	Not known	TMRU U.W.I. UNICEF Italian Health Corp. Mother & Child Health Programme	1979 to 1989 Ongoing
Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) Project	Secondary Schools 7-9 10 & 11 Pilot	Curriculum development, Teacher Training, Student Assessment, Civil Works (Refurbish 28 schools, build 3 new ones) Guidance and Counseling, Text Books provision, Resource and Technology and Evaluation	J\$38 M	World Bank and MOEY&C	1993 to 2000 2001 – 2003 - 2007
Competency Shelter Project	Primary and All-Age Schools	Remedial work with underachievers	J\$1,510,000	UNESCO, UNICEF & MOEY&C	Ongoing
Integration of Day Care & Early Childhood Education	Nurseries, basic schools, infant schools & infant departments, kindergarten	Integration of Early Childhood care and Education Nationwide starting with pilot in St. Catherine and Clarendon	J\$6.8 M	GOJ, UNICEF & Bernard Van Leer Foundation	Sept 1997 To 2000
EDUNET	104 schools of all types	Provide computers, internet access and computer literacy training in schools, develop intranet linkages	J\$47 M	HEART/NTA MOEY&C	August 1997 to 1998

Programs	Target Group	Focus	Funding Level	Funding Agency	Duration
Family Life Education Curriculum Development Sub-Project	Primary & All-Ages schools	Integrating Health & Family Life in the Curriculum	US\$323,735	USAID & MOEY&C	Sept. 1996 To Feb. 1999
School Bus Project	All children nationwide	Provide safe, reliable transportation for school children	J\$2.3 M	GOJ	1997/98 & Ongoing
New Horizon For Primary Schools Project	72 poor performing Primary schools	Curriculum development, Materials supply, teacher training, school management, technology use in school, Parenting Education	US\$14 M	USAID & MOEY&C	August 1997 To May 1995
Primary Education Support Project (PESP)	Primary schools	Teacher training, curriculum implementation, materials supply use of technology in school, use of school administrative software, principals diploma programmed, civil works		IADB & MOEY&C	Dec 2002 to March 2006
Enhancement of Basic Schools Project		Training of Early Child hood Practitioners, parenting education, teacher certification	US\$15.8 M	Caribbean Development Bank & MOEY&C	2002 to 2005
Jamaica All-Age School Project	Primary and All-Age Schools	Improved School Community relations; improved School management, teacher training		DFID & MOEY&C	

ANNEX IV: GENDER EQUALITY PLANNING MODEL



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