

EFJ as Project Fund Managers – Year 2

The first year of the Bernard van Leer Foundation BvLF Project came to an end in June 2002 with much success. A synopsis of the activities and achievements for the year, is outlined below:

Development and training

- 24 parents were trained in parenting roles and techniques. The second component will begin in year 2 to accommodate the further needs of this group while a new batch of 24 will receive training.
- The training of parents (at schools as mentors in their community) commenced in year 2. Sixty were originally targeted to receive training in year one, but decision was taken to begin with schools.
- 27 principals, 36 teachers and 54 caregivers (total – 117) were trained. Another 72 are scheduled for training in year 2.
- Early childhood stimulation and learning materials provided for 28 of 33 schools.
- The Voluntary Organization for Uplifting Children (VOUCH) and the Blue Cross Environmental Health Foundation (BCEHF) refurbished the play area of three schools while the Hope for Children Development Company (HCDC) air marked the clearing and grassing of a communal play area to serve the needs of all its 19 schools. This work is however incomplete as the owner of the land has since object to the erection of the play equipment and a watchman's quarter on the site. He has nevertheless offered to sell the site to the HCDC. Plans are being made regarding an agreement for the HCDC to purchase the land at a suitable price
- The dental clinic at the VOUCH was refurbished and equipped.
- 2 kitchens were refurbished in year 1 by BCEHF, 6 will receive attention in year 2.
- One toilet area was refurbished by BCEHF, while the HCDC will undertake this activity in year 2.
- 6 basic schools received school furniture; others are cited for assistance in year 2.
- Establishment of pilot cluster boards and training for board members for year 2.

Workshops

- Parenting workshops will be conducted in year 2.
- A community "bashment/consultation was carried out to serve the needs of 8 communities. ("Bashment" being a culturally accepted form for bringing people together)
- Health and nutrition workshops benefited 11 communities – cooks, parents, teachers were trained. This is to be further developed in year 2.

- The documentation of the project will be done in year 2, documenting the process, contents and results of the projects in a multi-media format.

Year 2 started with a spate of violence. Communities served by the HCDC and the VOUCH, experienced politically and gang related violent activities in the areas. In light of the outbreak of violence in the inner city communities, the BvLF has supported programme initiatives that would allow staff to collaborate with the violence prevention clinic and assist families and communities in need of help through trauma management and grief counseling. Persons affected both directly and indirectly by means of the violence were referred to the clinic at the University of the West Indies (UWI) others benefited from a trauma management workshop that targeted 25 participants over two days. Funding is being sought from other sources to ensure that the anticipated demands of this project can be met.

The first batch of 18 caregivers was trained in September 2002. Due to violence, the training of parents was rescheduled until March 2003. Health and nutritional workshops will commence in 2003. HCDC was able to source and distribute food supplies, (cooking oil, wheat flour and gritz), to 28 schools. Monthly meetings with basic school principals by HCDC continue to take place. UWI social work students have been assisting with the formation of 5 new Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and working to support the PTAs already established in 4 schools. A total of 9 schools are presently being assisted. Plans are in place to hold a community event to inform communities about VOUCH's activities and to motivate them to get more involved.

In order to reach a wider community of parents, a thirteen (13) episode radio drama series "Cutty's Corner" is being developed for broadcasting over a three-month period. Each episode will approach a distinct problem or issue in parenting, while at the same time forming part of a continuing story line. The episodes are envisaged as a 10-minute radio drama for public education to be aired on ROOTS FM Community Station, Kingston, Jamaica. The radio drama will document the parenting skills training initiated during Year 1 of the BvLF Child Support Programme and is aimed at motivating parents, especially men, to become more involved in parenting and to stimulate their sense of responsibility. In order to reach different audiences the radio drama will be aired twice weekly, once in the morning and once in the evening. "Cutty's Corner" will be broadcast to the public in the second to the third quarter of this year.