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PARTNERSHIP FOR LITERACY ENHANCEMENT FOR THE DEAF PROJECT

CONTRACTOR(S)/GRANTEE(S): **JAMAICA ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEAF (JAD)**

DURATION: APRIL 2017- OCTOBER 2020

TOTAL PROJECTED INVESTMENT: \$2,416 795

FUNDING SOURCE: DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM, CBSI

Approximately 2% of Jamaica's population is either Deaf or Hard of Hearing. With approximately 400 students registered across the island's 11 Schools for the Deaf, the PLED project is collaborating with 8 of these schools to implement Jamaican Sign Language (JSL) activities with parents, teachers, school administrators and students. The Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD) recognized the low literacy among students partly due to the inadequate parenting and communication skills and the lack of teachers' competence in academic JSL and appropriate instructional strategies best suited for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) students. This then manifests itself into the absence of the integration of the Deaf persons into the wider community. Inclusive education for all and reducing citizen vulnerability is the overarching object this project aims to address.

Focus is placed on improving the language development of D/HH students via guided language enrichment activities, introduction to JSL as a curriculum subject, and training teachers and parents in appropriate techniques for learning support. Emphasis is also given to coaching and mentorship for school administrators and students to build confidence in the implementation of the bilingual approach and general instructional practices.

Significant achievements to date include the development of six of nine levels of the Jamaican Sign Language Grammar Curriculum (JSLGC) as well as the successful first phase of the pilot with over 50 students. Additionally, of the cohort of parents, 160 have received various levels of support and intervention such

as JSL training, training on child rights and different strategies to support the literacy development of their D/HH children.

Approximately 75% of the teachers and Deaf Culture Facilitators have been exposed to JSL training and effective instructional strategies that are aligned to the needs of D/HH students. Field trips, reading boot camps and reading competitions were key interventions implemented with a reach of approximately 150 students across the 8 schools. Seventy-Four students have received psychological screening and assessment to ascertain developmental challenges affecting the expected academic development.

The project continues to realise gains evident in increased parental confidence in signing to their Deaf or Hard of Hearing children as well as the academic progress seen at school level assessments.