

TC ABSTRACT

I. BASIC PROJECT DATA

Country:	Jamaica
TC Name:	Partnering with Parents to Foster Academic Success
TC Number:	JA-T1094
Team Leader/Members:	Emma Näslund-Hadley (SCL/EDU), Team Leader; Cynthia Hobbs (EDU/CJA); Donna Harris (SPH/CJA), and Livia Mueller (SCL/EDU)
Indicate if: Operational Support, Client Support, or Research & Dissemination.	Research & Dissemination
Reference to request:	IDBDOCS# 37726162
Date of TC Abstract:	11 October 2013
Beneficiary:	Ministry of Education in Jamaica
Executing agency and contact name:	SCL/EDU, Emma Näslund-Hadley
IDB funding requested:	US\$800,000
Local counterpart funding, if any:	US\$100,000 (in kind)
Disbursement and execution period:	Disbursement: 36 months - Execution: 30 months
Required start date:	March 2014
Types of consultants:	Firm and individual consultants
Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU
Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/EDU
Included in Country Strategy (y/n):	Yes, related to enhancing quality and access to education
TC included in CPD (y/n):	Yes
GCI-9 Sector Priority:	Yes, social policy for equity and productivity

II. JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 **Justification.** Although there is no question that schooling is crucial for child learning, recent research reminds us that parents are what matters most. A study by researchers from Brown University and University of North Carolina at Greensboro found indications that parental involvement may be more important for school performance than a child’s intelligence (Topor, Keane, Shelton and Calkins, 2010). Researchers from the University of New Hampshire discovered that the impact of parental involvement¹ is so important that to achieve the same effect, schools would need to increase per-pupil spending by more than \$1,000 (Smith Conway and Houtenville, 2008).
- 2.2 Parental involvement may be even more important in developing countries than in industrialized societies. A recent study looked at the association of parent-child communication and academic success in 33 educational systems that participated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006 and 39 that participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000. The study suggests that students in economically less developed countries reap greater rewards of parent-child communication than students in industrialized countries. The author hypothesizes that this could “suggest that students reap greater rewards of parent-child communication when faced with an adverse national economic environment” (Caro, 2011).

¹ Changing their self-reported involvement from “never” to “sometimes.”

- 2.3 Decades of research also show that parental stimulation boosts a child’s cognitive growth. When parents are involved, their children get higher grades and score higher on both cognitive and standardized learning tests. The research also reveals that simple support to parents can help them become more involved and increase their children’s academic performance. Nye, Turner and Schwartz (2006) found that parent participation in enrichment classes for less than 12 weeks, helped their children achieve an equivalent of four to five months improvement in math and reading.
- 2.4 While the Bank has a portfolio of some 2,900 million dollars in education, the resources are mainly spent on improvements in the children’s school environments and the quality of the education they receive when in school. In the area of parental involvement, the Bank’s research has not included parents’ involvement in homework, but rather focused on nutrition, health, early stimulation, and preschool enrollment.² Although school-age children are estimated to spend only between 15 and 30% of their waking hours in school, the Bank has no model for improving parental involvement beyond the school door. The Bank’s new Education Sector Framework Document (2013, [IDBDOCS#37926110](#)) acknowledges and calls for increased involvement of parents in their children’s education.
- 2.5 Finally, in terms of its relevance for Jamaica, there is national recognition that effective parenting is crucial to improving child development, as evidenced by recently endorsed legislation for parenting support and education. A National Parenting Support Policy was approved by Parliament in 2012 and the first head of the National Parenting Support Commission was appointed by the Minister of Education in May 2013. A natural starting point for working with parents also exists. Under the National Strategic Plan for the Early Childhood Commission, seven pilot Parent Places were set up across the country to provide parenting education and support, and 160 additional parent places will be established in the next year with UNICEF and USAID assistance. This vehicle for implementation fits well with the focus of this Technical Cooperation (TC) on parenting interventions for early childhood and primary school-age children. In terms of the TC’s contribution to the portfolio, it would provide additional information on how to influence and improve student performance through non-school-based interventions. Findings would enhance ongoing and upcoming education (JA-L1024; JA-L1033) and SPH (JA-L1037) operations, and would contribute to the Bank’s strategic objective related to improving quality and access to education under the Country Strategy.
- 2.6 **Objective.** The TC aims to help close the knowledge gap in the area of parental involvement training. The objectives of the TC are two-fold. First, it aims to develop and pilot a parental training model that fosters parental practices that have been found to be successful in enhancing children’s cognitive growth and academic performance. Second, the TC aims to promote interest in parental training initiatives among education systems in the region.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

- 3.1 To accomplish its objectives, the TC will be structured around four components:

² Parenting pilot in the Caribbean for the 0-3 age group (RG-T1894); Program to Accompany the Implementation of the National Policy for Children in Nicaragua (NI-L1059).

- 3.2 **Component 1. Model for Parental Involvement.** The TC will finance the development, validation, and publication of a curricula and training model for parental involvement for improving academic performance of pre-primary and primary school age children. The model will draw from parental involvement activities that have been found to be effective in improving children’s academic achievement.
- 3.3 **Component 2. Parent Training Pilot.** The TC will finance the piloting of the model in Jamaica during one academic year.
- 3.4 **Component 3. Assessment of children’s academic achievement.** The TC will finance an experimental design of the pilot, contrasting any changes in learning of children in the treatment groups with children from groups of comparison parents. The collection of the baseline and data processing will take place at the beginning of the school year. The second application of the evaluation instruments will take place during the last two months of the school year. This component will be focused primarily on mathematics.
- 3.5 **Component 4. Dissemination and Promotions Campaign.** The TC will finance a regional parental involvement campaign to promote the model among education systems in the region. The campaign will promote the new model and disseminate the results of the pilot through a video, a publication, and a workshop.

IV. BUDGET

- 4.1 The amount of funding needed to achieve the expected outputs by component is indicated below.

Table IV-1: Indicative Budget in US\$

Component/Activity	Description	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding ³	Total Funding
Comp. 1. Model for parental involvement	Firm + consultants	90,000	-	90,000
Comp. 2. Training pilot	Consultants	550,000	100,000	650,000
Comp. 3. Assessment of academic achievement	Firm	100,000	-	100,000
Comp. 4. Dissemination and promotion	Firm + consultants	50,000	-	50,000
Miscellaneous		10,000	-	10,000
Total		800,000	100,000	900,000

V. EXECUTING AGENCY AND EXECUTION STRUCTURE

- 5.1 **Executing agency.** The TC will be executed by the Education Division (SCL/EDU). The TC execution will be under the supervision of Emma Näslund-Hadley (SCL/EDU).
- 5.2 **Execution period.** The TC will disburse in 36 months and execute in 30 months from the approval date.
- 5.3 **Procurement.** Standard Bank procedures will be followed.

VI. PROJECT RISKS AND ISSUES

- 6.1 The execution of a pilot based on an experimental design in C countries presents logistical challenges. However, the SCL/EDU has many years of experience in the execution of such evaluation designs in remote geographic areas with difficult terrain.

³ Financed in kind through local counterpart from the Ministry of Education in Jamaica.

VII. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION

- 7.1 The pilot is not anticipated to have direct environmental or social impacts and is expected to be classified as a “C” according to the Safeguard Classification Tool. No environmental impact is foreseen as the initiative is limited to consultancies and the production of didactic materials. No Bank resources will be used to finance investments in infrastructure or large scale equipment.