

# JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

*ISO 14001:2004 CERTIFIED*



## **\$22 million basic school for farming community**

Remotely located in the hills of western St. Catherine is the lush farming community of Bellas Gate, which is to officially join the ranks of over 300 communities that have benefited from early childhood institutions constructed by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

The Board of the JSIF has approved the construction of a \$22 million of the Bellas Gate Basic School to serve the estimated 98 children ages 3-5 years in Bella Gate and the surrounding communities of Blue Hole, Joe Ground, Pleasant Hill and Cocoa Walk. The need for the school arose out of the fact that the nearest childhood educational facility is over 4km away, which would daily commute for students and parents many of whom cannot manage such financial burden.

Residents determined to not allow their financial situation to hamper their children's chance at education, had previously constructed a one room structure in 1950. The building has now fallen into serious disrepair with holes in the zinc roof that terminates learning whenever it rains. Teachers and parents have expressed concerns of the school's facilities which include a kitchen without ventilation and pit latrines that are located on slopes in the school yard.

The new Bellas Gate Basic School will be constructed in line with the Early Childhood Commission standards. The new school will consist of three (3) classrooms, bathroom facilities for teachers and students, kitchen, canteen area, administrative area, a sick bay play area, a water storage tank and perimeter fencing. The students will also benefit from

the additional amenities of a drinking fountain, see-saw, sand pit and a slide. The school will also be equipped with a stove, fridge, chairs and desks for students and teachers.

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