



JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

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The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) put the final touches to new, state of the art early childhood institutions

In the communities of Islington in St. Mary and Bunkers Hill in North Clarendon last week, members of the community and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) put the final touches to two new, state of the art early childhood institutions which collectively will serve some 111 students aged three to six years old from the local and surrounding districts.

In both cases, the finishing element introduced in the week past were commemorative plaques placed on the wall during handing over ceremonies which recorded the projects' construction by JSIF under the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF), fifth cycle, with funding from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

On May 18, parents, teachers and well-wishers also gathered to see the installation of Jamaica's first interactive whiteboard in the new Islington Early Childhood Institution.

The Smart Board interactive whiteboard uses touch detection for input from digital pens instead of traditional markers. A projector is used to display a computer's video output on the interactive whiteboard.

On May 19 In Bunkers Hill, members of the United Purchased Church of God Bunkers Hill which sponsored the project and teachers at the new Bunkers Hill Basic school gave the grounds of the institute a special cleaning prior to the handing over and unveiling of the plaque; and also laid on a special meal for visitors who included JSIF officials, political representatives, principals from surrounding schools and officials from the Ministry of Education which provided the school's high ventilation design.

Constructed was done with CDB funding of J\$18.9 million and community contribution of J\$2.26 million features three standard sized class rooms, computers, bathroom facilities, plus kitchen with storage facilities, sick bay, play area, water storage facilities and sewer and drainage systems. It will serve 31 students and three teachers who before had classes in the United Purchased Church of God church Hall.

Member of Parliament for Northern Clarendon Laurence Broderick who was in attendance last week pledged J\$1 million from his constituency fund to the institution. The money will be used to complete payment for the land on which the school stands and support further development. .

In the case of Islington Early Childhood Institution, the new school of four classrooms replaces a single hall in which classes for 88 students were held, separated only by blackboards.

Total project cost was J\$67,795,854.00, with some J\$2 million coming from the community in the form of the value of the land, sweat equity for construction and other contributions.

New facilities include a kitchen, a sick bay, a principal's office, teacher's rest area, store room, sanitary facilities, and enclosed courtyard and a play area. Classrooms are equipped with items including 60 trapezoidal desks , 120 metal chairs , 4 teachers desks, 4 teachers chairs, 4 teachers cupboards , 4 Dell computer systems, 4 interactive whiteboards, a projector and eight pin boards.

The kitchen from which students and staff will now have their hot meals on a daily basis have been outfitted with a refrigerator, a four- burner gas stove, a stainless steel sink, wash hand basin. And for the safety and comfort of the general school population, the institution has also been equipped with two fire extinguishers, two day beds and a first aid kit.

The new play area equipped with a four-seat swing, Jungle gym, slide and see-saw.

Started 24 years ago, the JSIF BNTF fund is intended to assist low-income communities in planning and implementing projects to improve access to essential services, providing social and economic infrastructures. Projects are now being invited under the Sixth cycle of this programme.

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