



JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

ISO 14001:2004 CERTIFIED

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2011.

The last mile of the way

A road by any other name, properly graded, drained and clad in new asphalt covering, might be just as appealing to any benefiting community. But, for residents of Gabriel Road in Johns Hall Clarendon, the completion of several kilometres of critical roadway by the European Union has proven a lifesaver. The road which was before was a track encroached on by forest, has been made fit for any modern community.

With the EU's support in the form of grant funding of \$26.4 million, JSIF reconstructed 1.3 kilometres of roadway under the EUBSP's Infrastructure Improvement Project for Traditional Banana Growing Communities which seeks to enhance the Government of Jamaica's (GoJ) Rural Development efforts and will facilitate improvement in the key sectors such as agriculture.

Road works included the construction of V-Drains, U-Drains, installation of kerb and channel, culverts and construction of cross drains, representing the last such project to be handed over under the European Union Banana Support Programme (EUBSP) by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF).

At the official handing over within the community on May 11, 2011, appreciative students of the Johns Hall basic school sang songs about road safety, celebrating the fact that they now have a road on which to travel home.

The target population in this rural farming community with a hilly terrain are neighbours to Aenon Town, Frankfield, James Hill to the East and Morgan's Forest to the South. The new road now makes it possible to travel through Johns Hall to Aenon Town, a feat which previously could not be done.

Direct beneficiaries were an estimated 1,500 residents, with possible increases in farm yields for 64 registered farmers of John's Hall.

Rolda Gray of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund board (JSIF) Board of Governance and Deputy Financial Secretary in the Public Public Education Division within the Ministry of Finance, who was also guest speaker at the event noted that many of the farmers of Johns Hall benefitted not only from the repaired road, but from the strengthening of maintenance mechanisms within the community through an Organizational Strengthening component.

They also received social services intervention delivered in the form of agricultural business management training. Improvement in yield and land value has been reported by the community since the start of the project in 2010.

The impact of the road on the livelihood of the farming community was emphasised by speakers at the event.

Community contributions to the rehabilitation effort included provision of two employment coordinators, provision of security/watchman for material and equipment, preparation /clear site to accommodate construction activities, Provision of sanitary facilities, clean up area after construction, communication for the duration of the project, traffic control, dust control, water for the works and discounted Labour.

Rolda Gray commended the group, stating, "One notable thing with JSIF projects is that the community provides equity which is a good sign. It is a sign that they

identify with the project and will care for it. When this is not the case, infrastructure could be vandalized.

Gray stated, “You must be commended for your part, because what was before was a six foot track. It is now a driving road. Heavy duty trucks will be much too heavy for this road. Do not allow sand trucks and others to use this as an alternate route. Don’t allow them to destroy it.”

Additional information on the JSIF and its projects can be found on the JSIF’s website at www.jsif.org

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