

BNTF 9 POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVES IN JAMAICA



CASE STUDY



The Context

Over the last two decades, Jamaica has experienced fluctuations in its poverty situation, influenced by various economic, social, and environmental factors. The national poverty rate in Jamaica was estimated to have declined to 12.6% in 2022, indicating a positive trend in reducing poverty levels. However, ongoing challenges in employment quality and economic stability remain key issues to address for sustained poverty reduction. **The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)**, through the **Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF)** programme has continuously supported combating poverty within the region.

In Jamaica, the BNTF focuses on community development with attention to water supply and sanitation, basic community access and drainage, and education and human resources development. In total, twenty BNTF-backed sub-projects were implemented by the **Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF)**, which equals to 7.2 million USD in disbursed grants.

To identify the sub-projects, **JSIF** utilised a demand-driven approach where communities or organised groups themselves requested assistance by writing a letter detailing their issue and asking JSIF for support

The SDF-financed Projects

In a case study developed as part of the multicycle evaluation of the SDF 8&9, a representative sample of five of those twenty backed BNTF 9 sub-projects were investigated. These five projects targeted vulnerable groups in rural/underserved communities and areas such as: children in infant and primary schools, including teachers and parents; youth-at-risk; students/youth with special needs; people lacking access and potable water; and small producers affected by the drought and inadequate water to irrigate.

The Windsor Community Water Project was initiated to address the lack of adequate potable water in Windsor, Moore Town and surrounding districts. The project focused on improving water access by rehabilitating the existing catchment system operated by the Maroon Council, installing a chlorination chamber for water purification, and laying down the necessary pipes to ensure a reliable supply of clean water to these communities.

Epworth Road had been in poor condition over 60 years. The project's core objective was to rehabilitate 3.1km of road surface to enhance accessibility and promote economic development within the community.

Marlie Mount Infant and Primary School Expansion and Rehabilitation Project aims to address significant overcrowding and enhance the learning environment. By expanding and rehabilitating the facilities, the project sought to alleviate the shift system, reduce overcrowding, and increase teacher-student contact hours, thereby improving the quality of education and ensuring compliance with educational standards.

The CPFSA Therapeutic Treatment Centre Construction Project was initiated to address the critical gap in providing screening, assessment, and therapeutic treatment for children exhibiting behavioural challenges. The primary objective of this project was to establish a specialised facility to address the deficiencies within the state's current system for diagnosing and managing these critical issues. The initiative is driven by recognising resource constraints and infrastructural limitations exacerbated by a shortage of trained social workers to provide essential clinical support. By creating a dedicated facility, the project sought to significantly enhance the state's capacity to identify and address these challenges effectively, ultimately improving outcomes for individuals needing specialised care and support.

The Albion Primary School Special Education Block Construction project was initiated in response to a critical need within MOEY¹ Region 5, as over 3,000 students were identified as performing below average and in dire need of specialised educational interventions. This project addressed the significant lack of institutions equipped to cater to children with special educational needs. The construction of the special education block sought to expand the school's capacity to provide essential services, thereby reducing waiting times and improving the quality of education for student with special needs.

There were some delays in the implementation of these five projects largely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, complex government approval processes, failed tenders, the need to find replacement sub-projects in 2020, contractor issues, and turnover of the **JSIF BNTF** team.

The Impacts

Overall, the BNTF sub-projects achieved their intended short-term results:

- 6000+ residents of the **Windsor** and surrounding Communities improved their access to water supply. However, improvements in the quality of water are yet to materialise.
- 170+ residents of the **Epworth** community reduced their transport cost/time to and from the community.
- 1600+ students of **Marlie Mount Infant School** are accessing a more conducive teaching and learning environment due to improved physical infrastructure.
- **CPFSA** centre is providing both short-term acute residential inpatient treatment and outpatient counselling services for affected children and their families.
- 30+ students with special needs at **Albion Primary** are accessing a more conducive teaching and learning environment.

Even though it is still early to assess how these projects are enhancing the quality of life of final beneficiaries, many residents of the **Windsor Community** have experienced time savings to use in productive activities because of the **Water Supply Rehabilitation project**. As a beneficiary illustrates, before the upgrades, water access was intermittent, especially in Windsor and parts of Siemens Valley, with shortages commonly occurring during dry periods. The improvements

that were made have now ensured that over 95% of the community has water access. However, improvement in hygiene and health were not yet achieved as the chlorination facility is not yet being used to treat the water in system.

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...
Before these upgrades, water access was intermittent, especially in Windsor and parts of Siemens Valley, with shortages commonly occurring during dry periods. The improvements have now ensured that over 95% of the community has water access, significantly enhancing daily life. Residents no longer need to rely on rivers or streams for water, reducing environmental contamination from chlorine and detergents.

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Wallace Sterling

Stakeholders' stories of change

Although it is still early to observe sustainable educational impacts, many students from **Marlie Mount** and **Albion** school have experienced improvements in their education performance. The BNTF school construction projects were one of the factors contributing to these achievements. Moreover, parents whose children attend these institutions have noted that the schools feature a more spacious environment, adequate school bathrooms and most importantly added support for their children who are in difficult situations.



Windsor Community Water Supply Rehabilitation

¹ Ministry of Education and Youth of Jamaica

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Since transferring to Albion, a school that offers a less confusing and more supportive environment, I've observed remarkable improvements in his behavior and academic engagement. He is now more receptive to learning, shows reduced wandering, and benefits from the attentive support of shadow aids. The school's calm and quiet atmosphere is particularly conducive to his needs, offering him comfort and stability.”

**Albion Primary School Special
Education Block Construction**
Stakeholders' stories of change

Likewise, **The Rehabilitation of the Epworth Rural Feeder Road** significantly boosted economic activity, community engagement, and the daily lives of local residents. Improved road infrastructure led to increased traffic and attracted new investments. One notable venture is a hydroponic farm that was established following the road improvements. The enhanced road conditions facilitated easy transportation of raw materials to the farm and swift delivery of products to markets, further stimulating the community's economic activity.



**CPFS (CDA)
Therapeutic Treatment Centre Construction**

