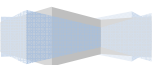


# Jamaicans for Justice

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## Social and Economic Justice Project

April 1, 2007- March 31, 2008



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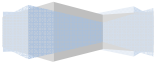
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## Theoretical Foundation

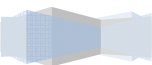
### Rights-based approach to Development

The United Nations, World Bank and many international nongovernment organisations have adopted a rights-based approach to development, which in a way compels many developing countries like Jamaica to adopt and pursue good governance practices. The pursuit and adoption of good governance standards and practices, according to the World Bank, is based on countries' decisions to improve six core areas of governance: voice and accountability—which measures peoples' realisation of human rights—political instability and violence, government effectiveness—which measures the competence of the bureaucracy and the quality of public service delivery—regulatory burden, rule of law, and control of corruption. Good governance is important because it gives people the opportunity to hold their governments accountable and claim their rights. According to the UNDP's Poverty Report 2000 the lack of accountability of governments and the inability of people to claim their rights are major obstacles to poverty reduction, therefore any movement to adopt good governance practices would increase opportunities for the realisation of human rights.

It is said that if governments are to be held accountable and people are to claim their rights, people will need to be organised and kept well informed. Education and advocacy is highlighted here as central strategies for preparing people to take active roles in governance reform, planning and programming. Education gives people access to information that empowers them to act and claim their rights. By learning about human rights they are able to assess their circumstances, plan, and act to change the situation. The UNDP's Poverty Report 2000 underscores that "a major source of poverty is people's powerlessness- not just their distance from government." People who are organised and informed are empowered to challenge poverty and the lack of realisation of human rights within and around them.

The rights-based approach underscores the centrality of "empowering people to make decisions about issues that affect their lives, rather than treating them as passive objects of decisions made on their behalf by bureaucrats." People are therefore converted to active agents of change who help to shape public policy and programmes. The rights-based approach to development speaks to the integration of human rights through the application of its principles—universality, indivisibility, accountability, participation, rule of law, and progressive realisation—in all aspects of national and local programme development and implementation. It is said that "the integration of human rights principles... will become particularly relevant at the local government level as it relates to basic social services delivery."

The UNDP believes that there are tremendous benefits to pursuing rights-based development planning and programming. They argue that current discussions on poverty emphasise that governments will need to integrate governance issues into poverty reduction strategies. The UNDP presents the human rights framework as a tool for programming and a vision for human-centred development—"It provides a normative foundation for tackling fundamental issues related to sustainable human development, and can play a catalytic role in bringing together governmental building and community support programmes in order to tackle poverty in a comprehensive and holistic way." The World Bank argues that research has shown that improved governance leads to higher living standards and poverty alleviation. Furthermore by measuring governance changes over time, it has been shown that there can be significant improvements and deterioration over period as short as six to eight years, therefore our governance practices today can wipe out major improvements made by a society or position it for significant growth and development. A rights-based approach to development addresses problems relating to poor access



and availability of services, as well as limited participation of people in development affairs. By adopting such an approach we increase opportunities for sustainable growth and development.

## Project Design

### Normative Exploratory Study

#### *Purpose*

When the Project commenced in 2006, stakeholders wanted to find out if there was a need for economic and social rights (ESR) programming amongst Jamaicans. After the first year evidence of ESR challenges at the local level—such as the poor condition of social services at the local level and peoples’ testimonies which convey messages about bad experiences realising ESR—stimulated the extension of the Project for an additional two years. Although the Project was not deliberately designed as an exploratory study, it became that, because stakeholders wanted to gain greater insight into the situation or ESR in Jamaica. The research did not adopt a pre-existing model, rather it sought to use workshops as educational and research events, focussing on information gathering and dissemination. By the end of year one, it was obvious that data gathering and sharing was not enough. There was need for change—which stimulated a redesign of the Project to include preparation for and participation in advocacy. Over year two we implemented our plan for information sharing & gathering and advocacy planning & implementation.

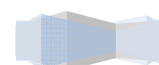
Normative studies, like this one, attempt to obtain information and point to which respects the object—economic and social rights—under study can be improved. Fundamentally, the Project sought to get information about peoples’ ability to realise ESR and learn how best they can be improved. The Project continued from year one into year two as practical development, which included advocacy planning for carrying out changes in peoples’ ability to realise ESR at the local level. Normative studies seek to find out methods to ameliorate physically the object as in the case of our use of advocacy as a method for improving peoples’ ability to realise ESR at the local level.

#### *Application*

Events were used as core strategies for obtaining and disseminating information. Workshops were specially designed to share information on ESR, leadership & advocacy, and to obtain information about peoples’ experiences realising ESR. Three distinct workshops—education, assessment, and leadership—were designed to fulfil the purpose of gaining and sharing information. Further, letters were sent to government agencies and leaders that had a stake in attending to difficulties of communities—resulting in meetings to advocate for change.

#### *Structure*

The research followed a somewhat linear path whereby the project proposal preceded a detailed plan of work—which commenced in April 2007, two months subsequent to the preparation of the proposal. In addition to planning, April was the month in which we commenced serious networking and communication for the new project year—the SDC listing of communities was requested and examined for sample selection. Simple random sampling was used to select twelve communities across four parishes for screening. From this six communities were identified for implementation over the course of the year. Over the course of the other eleven months three types of events were implemented in each community. Three communities from the previous year were identified for further support, resulting in a total of 21 workshops to be executed. Education workshops were the first events to be introduced to each new community, followed by assessment, then leadership workshops. Eight months into the Project, advocacy letters were prepared and distributed to national leaders based on the findings of the workshops. Advocacy meetings soon followed and continued to the end of the project year. In the final month focus



was on evaluating the Project and preparing final reports. Data collected via questionnaires over the course of year one and two were transformed from a paper-based to a digital system in SPSS for detailed analysis. Data entry, review, and evaluation were done periodically between the months of November 2007 and March 2008 at which time final reports were submitted.

### *Assumptions*

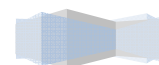
In continuing our work from year one to two we took a number of things for granted. This was so because we had experienced the Project for an entire year and were in the unique position of having experienced the field. We therefore rely heavily on clarifying the researcher's assumptions and approach as well as data collected from participants in validating the assumptions made:

1. Community Assessment Workshops (CAWs) and the tools designed for executing them are adequate for identifying the variety of ESR issues affecting communities. The various tools—SEJ Situation Survey, ESR Local Infrastructure Survey, Social Justice Report Card, and numerous open-ended discussion questions; methods; and researchers that were involved in the event produced significant information about the experiences of people and the situation of the wider communities. Large group activities such as discussions, one-on-one dialogue, and the use of technology (photography) were the main methods used for gathering data from people and about the community—these were executed by the two researchers who attended CAWs—ensuring that ethical standards are met. This also increases opportunities comparing different kinds of information as well as the experiences of different persons about the field.
2. Community Education Workshops (CEWs) provide sufficient general information about ESR in order to stimulate communities to discuss and recognise it. From my experience during year one of the Project, I discovered that while communities were enthused about new and rights-based information. At the CEWs there is usually keen attention paid to the delivery of educational material—which covers issues of the history of human rights, and economic and social rights—but there is certainly no shyness of expression, as participants are known to engage in lengthy discussions in responding to burning issues or questions posed. There is generally intense discussions and frequent interruption in the delivery of human rights information. Participants have on many occasions have spent more time fuelling and engaging in active discussions rather than fulfilling the profile of the attentive bookworm. Such interest is evidence that information provided through CEWs is adequate.
3. Social Development Commission (SDC) listing of communities is an adequate source of information for identifying local groups and communities to implement the Project. The SDC has an extensive list of community-based organisations which are affiliated to different types of social organisations at the local level, including churches, schools, police youth clubs, neighbourhood watches and citizens' associations. A list is available for every parish, and the organisation has dedicated research and support staff in all parishes across the island, who have responsibility for gathering, updating, and publishing such information for public use. The SDC has record of more than 700 communities, many of which are available by accessing the website or relevant parish office. From my experience using SDC lists over the past two years, I have found them to be a reliable source of ready information on contacting communities for implementing social programmes.

### *Delimitation and Limitations*

We will not be in the position to make generalisations (or develop working hypotheses) about the data obtained and analysed over the course of the year for a number of reasons:

1. Humans are complex subjects whose past experiences, partisan preferences, and state of mind can affect how things are perceived



2. Small sample size, which is not representative of the larger communities from which participants are residents;
3. Short duration of the Project, which makes it difficult to monitor and report changes associated with knowledge and skills empowerment—which according to the World Bank can significantly change a society when monitored over a period of six to eight years;
4. All participants in the Project do not represent unique households in their community, therefore data may be biased because it is influenced by a small number of families; and
5. Data recording strategies were limited to short events lasting no more than four hours in each community; therefore no lengthy details were obtained about individual and communities' experiences of ESR.

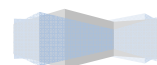
## Challenges

A number of challenges were encountered over the course of the Project year. These included:

1. Weather- the Project was affected by an active hurricane season, with the passing of Hurricane Dean in August 2007 causing many postponements. The fact that most of our communities were located in the parish of St. Thomas presented particular challenges, because of the possibility of flooding at Yallahs fording during rainy weather
2. Election- General Election was held in September 2007 and resulted in significant postponements of events, because of the fact that campaigns were in high gear, and people were weary of people exploiting the situation to solicit their votes. The fact that Jamaica is also known for violent elections also convinced me to allow a couple of months to lapse before remobilising for Project events
3. Accountant- a change in the accountant officer and his unfamiliarity with the process resulted in challenges in accessing funding and other resources in a timely
4. Technological failures- technical difficulties with the laptop resulted in difficulties in making presentations
5. Roads- the poor condition of the roads leading to Albion Mountain and significant difficulties experienced there on previous occasion contributed to significant fears about making that journey. On conversing with residents of the community I was advised that the roads had deteriorated further because of the passing of Hurricane Dean in August 2007
6. Other factors- in the case of Santa Hill in Clarendon we were not able to convene CEWs scheduled on two distinct occasions because of the absence of water at the proposed venue

## Ethical Standards

Ethics was a primary concern from our implementation in year one. This led to the design of an introductory letter and informed consent sheet to increase appreciation for and compliance to ethical standards in social science research. Like other social science research, the SEJ project attended to some core ethical issues: environment free from harm, informed consent, concealment and deception, anonymity, and confidentiality. These issues are outlined in the letter and consent sheet which are read before commencing CAWs, which are the main data collection events. Signed consent sheets are returned to data collectors and are kept with surveys.



## Project Description

### Background

#### *Object of Study*

In this Project ESR is the object of study—the Project defines ESR as standards aimed at improving the quality of life and socioeconomic experiences of individuals at the local level. In light of this, the Project seeks to measure peoples' experiences via: (1) their perception of the government as key providers of ESR services, (2) the physical condition of ESR resources, and (3) the variety of developmental needs that are expressed at the local level.

#### *Target*

The Project targeted ordinary Jamaicans of the low to middle-income group who reside in urban and rural communities. Participation from persons of all ages, political & religious persuasion, and gender are encouraged. Community leaders are assigned the responsibility of identifying participants for sessions, based on pre-determined criteria expressed in introductory letters. In many instances participants are members of the CBO through which contact was made with the community, therefore our target are also members of community organisations that are listed with SDC.

#### *Overall Goal*

To contribute to the development of a more just and equitable society for the citizens of Jamaica by a process of research, community education and advocacy around issues of social and economic justice and rights.

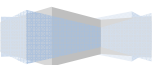
### Project Events

#### *Education Workshops*

CEWs were designed to disseminate, to participants in the Project, general information about human rights and more specifically ESR. Six CEWs were planned for the year, of that number five were executed in the following communities: Albion, Springfield, & Morant Bay of the parish of St. Thomas, Fair Prospect of Portland, and the blind & visually impaired in the Kingston Metropolitan Region (KMR). Significant attempt was made with two other communities—Pagee, St. Mary and Santa Hill, Clarendon—to implement the Project, but the attempts failed. In the case of Pagee letters were sent on two distinct occasions to community and church leaders but no evidence of any serious attempt was to facilitate us was seen—identification of date, time, venue, meal provider, and directions. Attempts at implementing the Project in Santa Hill was delayed by the lack of water at the local church, which was identified as the venue for the event. The community was mobilised and materials were prepared and packaged for CEWs on February 2 and March 22, 2008, but the community leader called to postpone because of lack of water.

#### *Assessment Workshops*

CAWs were designed primarily to gather information about the personal and community experiences of ESR at the local level. No CAW can be executed in a community where there was never a CEW. Six CAWs were planned for the year, and five executed in: Albion, Springfield, Morant Bay, Fair Prospect, and blind & visually impaired in KMR. Like CEWs, CAWs target 20 persons for each session, provides a stipend for participants.



## Leadership Workshops

LTWs were designed to build the capacity of community leaders to provide quality leadership and a commitment to ESR advocacy. Information was presented in modular format and exposed participants to a wide range of topics and learning platforms: advocacy, leadership, group development, video advocacy, conflict, and networking & communications. Communities that received LTWs experienced a CEW and CAW. Nine LTWs were planned for the year and six were executed in Albion, Springfield, Morant Bay, Rockfort, Fair Prospect, and the blind and visually impaired. LTWs target ten to fifteen leaders, who are paid a stipend for their participation.

## Evaluation Workshop

This was a one-time event that was executed at the end of the year, March 13, 2008, in order to help to pull the data together for analysis and answer critical questions. Leaders from participating communities were asked to join us at the office, where we prepared them for autonomous work and sought their feedback on important issues.

## Advocacy Meetings

Nine months into the Project we prepared advocacy letters which were dispatched to thirty government agencies or ministries. These letters attended to the challenges and needs articulated by communities and requested meetings to advance dialogue with institutional leaders. A total of five agencies—National Works Agency (NWA), SDC, Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL), National Environmental Planning Agency (NEPA), and the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF)—facilitated meetings involving myself and community leaders. One agency wanted to do more than to listen to the problems and spearheaded the formation of a working group to make actual changes based on expressed needs. JFLL representatives, community leaders, and I met on January 2 and February 22, 2008, and have commenced work on implementing adult learning centres in three of six communities that were introduced in the letter: Albion Mountain, Springfield, and Fair Prospect. The working group will meet again on April 8, 2008, and are looking to open the centres by September 2008. Follow-up calls were made to schedule meetings in June and beyond with other agencies that were sent letters. About four more expressions of interest in meetings were received on account of the attempt.

## Community ESR Problems

The study revealed that there are a number of ESR problems that are hindering peoples' development at the local level. The problems that are in need of immediate attention, according to participants, are listed in the table below. The main problems relate peoples' right to work, education, healthcare, safe environment adequate living standard, property ownership, and water.

Community Name	ESR Problems
Blind & visually impaired	<b>Work:</b> Poor wages, working conditions, and unfriendly working environments; Absence of viable and sustainable employment opportunities
	<b>Education:</b> Limited access to specialised skills training facilities for employment Poor access to literacy programmes
	<b>Healthcare:</b> Inaccessible health insurance
	<b>Property Ownership:</b> Limited access to pro-poor housing
	<b>Other:</b> Experiences of stigma & discrimination (S&D) in public institutions; No powerful champion to articulate needs of disabled persons;

	Lack of respect by the public for the rights of disabled persons; Psychological abuse meted out on disabled dependents by relatives
<b>Morant Bay</b>	<b>Environment:</b> Flooding of the Brown's gully
	<b>Adequate living standard:</b> Absence of safe recreational area for young children
	<b>Property Ownership:</b> Limited access to pro-poor housing
	<b>Other:</b> Experiences of S&D and bad treatment in public institutions
<b>Albion</b>	<b>Property Ownership:</b> Informal settlement on property adjacent to the community
	<b>Adequate living standard:</b> No land to erect community property No maintenance of empty lots within the community Bad roads throughout the community
	<b>Environment:</b> Flooding and erosion by Cow Bay Garbage disposal along Cow Bay Air pollution from sand mining site
<b>Springfield</b>	<b>Work:</b> Lack of technical and financial assistance to start micro-business; Limited income generating activities
	<b>Education:</b> Poor adult literacy levels
	<b>Environment:</b> Air pollution caused by illegal or accidental burning the dump; Flooding of the Johnson River beyond Bustamante bridge
	<b>Property Ownership:</b> Pro-poor housing
	<b>Adequate living standard:</b> Inadequate resources to maintain community play field Bad roads throughout the community
<b>Fair Prospect</b>	<b>Water:</b> Inadequate water supplies
	<b>Adequate living standard:</b> Absence of a multipurpose field in Comodore; Bad roads throughout the community
	<b>Work:</b> Limited income-generating activities
	<b>Education:</b> Youth information centred to help with homework & Internet support; Poor adult literacy levels
<b>Rockfort</b>	<b>Environment:</b> Air pollution from factories
	<b>Adequate living standard:</b> Bad roads throughout the community
	<b>Education:</b> Poor adult literacy levels
	<b>Work:</b> Limited income generating activities
	<b>Other:</b> Crime and violence
<b>Albion Mountain</b>	<b>Adequate living standard:</b> Bad roads throughout the community
	<b>Education:</b> Poor adult literacy levels Five miles by foot through hill terrain to the nearest basic school

<b>Water:</b> No water is supplied to the community
<b>Work:</b> No opportunities to pursue work in areas other than farming

## Interpretation of Findings

### ESR Activities

#### *Education Workshops*

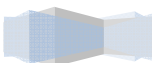
These events represented the first point of physical contact with communities, where they are introduced to the object of study. CEWs were particularly meaningful for the communities because some participants were, for the first time, being informed about human rights principles, standards, and policies. The session stimulated much discussion in each of the participating communities, and provided the informational base required for future leadership and advocacy work. Participants articulated that the information delivered was enlightening because for the first time they are realising that the benefits and improvements in areas of education, healthcare, housing, and social security are not provided because one of the two political parties are more concerned about people, but the natural course of social development because of governmental responsibility for guaranteeing the realisation of ESR. CEWs helped to ensure the success the Project in each new community because we are making our first impression on communities. All communities—except two of three that were carried over from year one—obtained CEWs went on to do CAWs, and LTWs. From our findings we can say that if a community convenes their CEW in the study year they will complete and participate in all Project activities. Additionally, as they spend more time with us their trust increases and they gradually begin to reveal more personal difficulties and feelings about politicians—the source of heated discussions in our workshops. Residents sometimes try to resist raising such issues, but a few brave one do venture, and they all lend their voices to the discussion within a short while.

#### *Assessment Workshops*

CAWs are quite different from CEWs and LTWs in one fundamental way—it was designed primarily to take as much away from the site about the object of study. We went in with camera in one hand and a heavy right hand full of data collection tools. I must say that I am biased towards educational sessions, as I am a talker. I just get personal with all the data, and I do tend to lay it all on the table for residents to see and understand. I think that CAWs are sometimes favoured by participants because they dominate, more than me, the stage—taking the powerful position of knowledge bearer. They shared personal experiences of difficulties and diligently took us through their communities. In my new role as note taker and observer, I watched participants ignite as they discussed challenges and needs.

#### *Leadership Workshops*

Participants of the CAWs were asked to indicate their interest in being trained as leaders to carry out and commit to advocacy for the improvement of ESR at the local level. This approach provided at least half of the participants for LTWs, and provided opportunities for distinguishing between those who want to remain bystanders and onlookers who lay blame about who is not doing something or other and those who are committed to working for change. In group development theory we distinguish the two as the assumption and working groups—both of which are as natural as conflict itself. LTWs like CEWs are heavy with top-down information delivered by a facilitator. These sessions are the least energetic, but provide important fundamentals for successful leadership and advocacy at the local level. Participants were always attentive, patient, and anxious to learn more from us—they remained a captive audience for sometimes as much a four hours.



### *Evaluation Workshop*

Seven of the nine communities participated in the evaluation workshop, which sought to pull core elements of the Project together, prepare community leaders for autonomous work, and obtain feedback on the experience obtained over the course of the year. This event was particularly interesting because for the first time different communities are brought together under a single umbrella to discuss a common issue—economic and social rights. The presentation of photos of well known community problems as well as telling captions enlivened the workshop and stimulated community leaders to expand on the issues presented and seek more information about issues of interest affecting other communities. The issue of crime in Rockfort stimulated an entire one hour discussion. Community leaders' enthusiasm to share information with others, talk about tabooed subjects and ability to interest as if they knew other before was inspiring, and for me a sign of the power and support that communities can provide for each other in support of the realisation of ESR. In some instances, they had common problems like flooding, unemployment, bad roads, and experiences of S&D—their interaction about such issues can stimulate the development of collaborative efforts to address common problems.

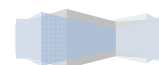
### *Miscellaneous Activities*

Over the entire duration of the Project year I was bombarded with calls to respond to issues relating to ESR. The calls came primarily from persons who participated in the Project, but there was also a steady number of requests to attend to needs that were brought to the attention of JFJ directors or came in through independent call-ins. This was a definite sign that Jamaicans needed a framework that would provide support and technical expertise about how to solve ESR problems. Some of the requests that I got were: advice about what to do when an eviction notice is given or difficulties with landlords, technical support to plan community events, request to represent the community to the police regarding citizenry lock-up, attendance at occasional community meetings to help stimulate local interest, advocacy to attend to experiences of bad treatment and S&D, and advice about how to proceed with lobby to claim right to humane treatment by the police. On most instances support was given via actual visits, telephone discussions, and document preparation when possible, but this placed significant burden on me to fulfil my various duties. Eventually requests had to be passed on to the JFJ responder. In many instances, there was much dissatisfaction as they anticipated greater assistance, but the reality is that it would require someone dedicated to respond to such issues.

## **Advocacy Activities**

### *Letters & Meetings*

Preparation for advocacy involved data analysis and coding of information from participating communities. The information was summarised and presented in the form of letters addressed to national leaders. Approximately twelve of the thirty agencies replied to our letter by acknowledging its receipt and expressing their general interest to meet. Five of the thirty agencies or 16.7 percent facilitated meetings with us. One of the agencies, JFLL, seized the opportunity and formed a working group aimed at making practical changes at the local level. All agencies that we interfaced with through advocacy meetings expressed an appreciation for our initiative to approach them about the issues. They all encouraged the participating communities to involve them as stakeholders in their local development planning. This experience demonstrates that there is an interest by government leaders to attend to peoples' development rights, but it will require an empowered and committed community to mobilise the various stakeholders using a wide variety of strategies. Community leaders will have to be transformed from their passive approach to development needs, to active change agents mobilising the community to meet, discuss, and act; and advocating national leaders to take the development matters seriously, give ear to people, and commit to assist in the realisation of change. On the face of it, this is a full time job, which community leaders will have to assume on behalf of their communities without financial compensation—



this is Herculean task if you consider the high level of apathy, fear, and competition that exist at the local level amongst residents, often cited in workshops as reasons for failures of community organisations.

## Value of Project to Governance

### *Perception of the Government*

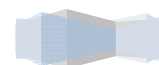
The perception of the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) as a provider and protector of ESR was one of the indicators used by the study to determine the kinds of experiences that people had. Peoples' perception of GoJ as a provider of ESR fit within the governance model of the World Bank, whereby government effectiveness—measuring the competence of the bureaucracy and the quality of public service delivery—is seen as a seminal indicator. The following are some of the perceptions that participants in our events expressed:

- *Ordinary citizens are powerless in relation to Government agencies,*
- *There is an absence of effort by the Government to educate people for preventive healthcare, they emphasise curative health because it brings in money,*
- *There is limited visible effort by Government to establish a sense of equality between country and town schools, prep and primary school in terms of quality, condition, and existence of particular services,*
- *There is insufficient effort made by Government to increase youth employment opportunities*
- *Absence of a sign that the Government has peoples' is concerned about and willing to changes the poor living standard of the majority of Jamaicans*
- *Inadequate sign of Government will to invest in the development of areas where Jamaicans are excelling in and exploiting it for their continued gain*
- *Perpetuation of political divisiveness amongst Jamaicans thereby increasing vulnerability and feelings of distance from other Jamaicans and powerless to Government*
- *Absence of visible Government effort to address the holistic development of members of the disabled community*
- *Lack of knowledge and sensitivity by Government leaders about issues affecting the disabled community*

These perceptions about Government attention to ESR issues affecting individual communities and Jamaicans generally speaks volumes about the levels of apathy that exists within our communities. The accuracy of peoples' perceptions is not the central issue, rather how their perception of Government affects how they see themselves leading and advocating for social change. The statements above highlight that people feel estranged from the Government, and do not see it fulfilling many of their socioeconomic needs. This situation according to the World Bank and the UNDP perpetuate poverty—which can only be changed if people overcome their powerlessness and alienation from government through being organised and well informed.

### *Condition of Local ESR Resources*

On our tour through the participating communities community leaders walked with us through the main areas, gave us opportunities to talk with other residents about the main need and challenges of the communities. Additionally, we got the unique opportunity of viewing and taking authorised photos of conditions that tell a story of the communities' experiences realising ESR. Photos provided physical evidence of the condition of gullies, roads, Government buildings, micro businesses, and homes in each community, further validating information provided by participants. The physical condition of ESR resources is important because it tells a story of neglect or attention. Pictures depicting the poor condition of ESR resources tell a thousand words—as was the case of the photograph in the evaluation workshop of



a basic school in Rockfort, riddled with bullet holes, a damaged roof and dilapidated doors—stimulating lengthy discussions for as long as an entire hour.

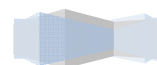
### *Role of the Community*

It is often times said that with rights come responsibilities, a message that most community leaders who have engaged with us for the past year are aware of by now. They have had to challenge themselves to learn new information, commit to learning and transferring information learnt to others, engage in advocacy meetings, attend an evaluation event, and commit to develop and implement an advocacy plan over the coming year. From our experience community leaders have risen to the occasion—representing their communities in six meetings with government leaders. They have raised issues of key importance and have made appeals for government intervention in and assessment of difficulties—NWA made commitment to assess reports of flooding of three communities including Springfield along the Johnson River in the vicinity of the Bustamante Bridge.

At the local level there is tremendous need for community mobilisation and ongoing training about developmental issues. We sometimes take for granted the fact that people need to be sensitised about and encouraged to adopt appropriate social and development practices. In addition, proper facilities need to be made available and accessible so as to promote appropriate behaviour. On my tour along the Brown's gully in Morant Bay, I realised that an environmental programme is desperately needed for residents as their actions compound many of their ESR problems. The situation of sewage and garbage disposal by residents in the Brown's gully is evidence of the passivity that UNDP report addressed. There has to be a will to challenge move all stakeholders to recognise that they are all responsible and have a fundamental role to play in solving the problem. While our experience reveals that there are willing community leaders and advocates, our study has also revealed that there is general passivity and disinterest by residents in community organisations and community development. Communities will need to overcome such behaviours if they are to confront and convert challenges to successes. Again, I draw on our experience over the past two years working with community leaders to mobilise participants for workshops as an indicator that all hope is not lost.

### *Role of National Leaders*

Our interaction with government leaders lasted for four months, over which time six advocacy meetings were held, one working group formed, and three communities identified for adult literacy programming. All leaders have expressed willingness to provide support to communities in their advocacy efforts as long as they took leadership of the process. Such responses from national leaders are signs of Government will and interest to address communities' ESR challenges—this is quite the opposite of local perceptions of the Government.



## Evaluation

### Community Readiness for Leadership and Advocacy

Community leaders who participated in the evaluation workshop addressed their readiness for leadership and advocacy by acknowledging and articulating the potential barriers to hosting monthly community meetings—a core outcome of the Project; as well as highlighting areas for assistance that would ensure the success of their advocacy plans.

Community leaders identified seven specific needs of the communities that would ensure changes in problems faced by communities and stimulate an active rather than passive attitude towards local development—*secure venue for community events, community unity and focus, regular community meetings involving local and external stakeholders, ongoing involvement in sports events, employment, increase in the amount of advocacy work done, and more education and communication activities.*

The barriers to hosting monthly meetings are:

1. Violence
2. Unwillingness of members to attend meetings
3. No venue and money for administrative work
4. Inability to keep community members regularly informed
5. Weak strategising skills

The areas highlighted by community leaders where JFJ assistance would ensure the success of their advocacy plans over the next year are:

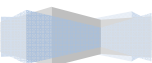
1. Legal advice
2. Planning support
3. Administrative support
4. Financial aid
5. Monitoring and Follow-ups
6. Education
7. Motivation

Despite these seemingly long lists of needs or challenges to community leadership and advocacy for the realisation of ESR, there is hope in the willingness of community leaders—two thirds of those attending the evaluation workshop expressed willingness to lead, while no one expressed unwillingness to provide this kind of leadership. The track record is good too with more than 77 percent of community leaders in the evaluation workshop affirming that they have facilitated community meetings to keep people informed about their advocacy work over the period, January- March 2008.

### Recommendations for the Project

The nine community leaders who attended the evaluation workshop were asked to make suggestions for changing or improving the Project. The following suggestions were gathered from the SEJ Evaluation Form which they completed:

1. Increase the number of persons and community organisations targeted in each community



2. Increase the training time, physical support and interaction provided to communities
3. Increase the amount hands-on work
4. Nationalise the method used within the SEJ project in other social organisations such as churches, schools, and clubs
5. Make the project a source of actual solution to tough ESR problems such as the need for road improvement and the construction of a school

## Conclusion

The SEJ project connects communities and government agencies together and thereby increases opportunities for accountability—the basis of good governance practices. In playing the role of connector of local and national government, the Project empowers community leaders, prepares community members, assesses community problems, and initiates advocacy to change ESR problems. The Project is also valuable because it increases knowledge of human rights thereby introduces to people such principles as: universality, indivisibility, accountability, participation, rule of law, and progressive realisation. Through the SEJ project Jamaicans are therefore empowered to overcome their passivity and to recognise that they are inherent holders of human rights who have a responsibility to protect those rights.

There is hope in the will of the community leaders to continue working and carrying the torch until others join them. They have expressed need for significant support over the coming year in order to ensure that their effort to engage in ESR advocacy is successful. The daunting task is peoples' behavioural changes—moving them to see themselves as active rather than passive stakeholders of local development. In providing people with the information about human rights the Project gives people the tools to overcome passivity.

