

## Let's Talk Goals

### COMMUNITY RENEWAL

*What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? Why does it matter? What does it mean for us as Jamaicans? This is the final in a series of articles on topical issues related to development in Jamaica written by sector specialists on inclusive growth, social protection, community development, trade and investment. This week, we will discuss the Community Renewal Programme and how it contributes to national development and achieving the SDGs.*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs recognise strong communities as an enabler of development through civic participation, accountability and ownership of the goals. This is central to the creation of good governance systems, strong institutions, safe spaces and building productive capacities. These areas are reflected in SDG target 11.7: “by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.”

In Jamaica, a key challenge to community development is security, as a result of crime and violence. In response, the Community Renewal Programme (CRP) was established in 2011 as a multi-level, integrated intervention for coordinating and enhancing service delivery among 100 of the most volatile and vulnerable communities in Jamaica. These communities were selected from among the five parishes that sustained the highest murder rates over the decade prior to 2011. Selection was determined by the level of vulnerability and volatility of a community, based on an index developed to measure poverty prevalence, presence of gangs, unemployment levels, literacy levels, rate of violent crime, rate of violence-related injuries, level of teenage pregnancy, rate of sexual assaults and level of informal settlement. The 100 communities that scored the highest by this index were selected from among the five targeted parishes—St James, Clarendon, St Catherine, Kingston and St Andrew.

The primary objective of the CRP is to achieve sustainable, positive change by harnessing multiple interventions under six broad thematic areas: **Social Transformation, Socio-economic Development, Governance, Youth Development, Physical Transformation, and Safety and Justice**. The CRP also supports the government's Citizen Security Plan (CSP) and has a defined role in the Plan of Action for the National Consensus on Crime, that supports the renewal of volatile and vulnerable communities. The work of the CRP is aligned with Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The CRP's programme of work supports partnerships to mobilise resources for action across society. To this end, an Umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed as a mechanism through which multiple partners collaborate, to support the priorities under the CRP Strategic Framework as well as Vision 2030 Jamaica, the Citizen Security Plan, and the SDGs. So far, more than 40 church groups, including umbrella organizations and individual church congregations have agreed to sign the MOU. This Umbrella MOU has also been signed by relevant ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) for the implementation of initiatives for capacity building, socio-economic development, child & youth development, and psychosocial interventions in CRP target communities. In addition to this partnership framework, the CRP also supports participatory governance through the operationalization of coordinating structures including the Inter-Agency Network of service providers, and parish councils and technical working groups, and operationalization of a Participatory Action Planning Framework. These governance structures provide an avenue for multi-stakeholder participation.

In pursuing peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the CRP has developed monitoring and evaluation tools—the Community Renewal Index, Volatility and Vulnerability Index, Community Readiness Assessment Tool, Performance Measurement Framework—which all support data-driven initiatives and strategies for improving lives and livelihoods in vulnerable communities. Building on the evidence-based approach, the CRP conducted mapping of cultural and creative assets in 19 communities, allowing for the identification of over 300 creatives and the subsequent selection of 100 participants who benefited from an IDB-funded capacity-building and entrepreneurship training and business mentorship.

The CRP further supports economic development initiatives such as the use of the social enterprise (SE) model as a venture to create community wealth. In this regard, and leading the charge to advance the development of the social enterprise ecosystem, the CRP successfully lobbied for the inclusion of social enterprises within the MSME and Entrepreneurship policy (approved by Cabinet in 2018). Additionally, CRP successfully implemented two phases of the EU and British Council funded Investment Climate Reform (ICR) Facility, through technical assistance received under its Business Reform component. Key outputs/achievements from this intervention include: development of a proposed Legal Status Act for the SE sector, and development of a marketing strategy and resource mobilization plan. The former leading to the preparation of a draft Cabinet Submission, now being finalized by the Chief Parliamentary Council (CPC) for submission to Cabinet; updating of registration documents within the COJ, DCFs and TAJ towards administrative reform to accommodate introduction of the legislation for the SE sector; training of over 60 representatives, including government officials, social entrepreneurs, private sector and civil society groups, in the use of the

Social Return on Investment (SROI) tool, Investment Readiness, and their role in supporting the SE ecosystem. An Investment Readiness Market Analysis was also conducted to inform the integration of social enterprises within the CSR policies of corporates to facilitate engagement, build awareness and promote the uptake and use of the service and product offerings of SEs.

The CRP represents the ideals of the 2030 Agenda in leveraging multi-stakeholder partnerships for action at the local level. Through targeting volatile communities in Jamaica, the work of the CRP and partners influences development through capacity building and strengthening of social capital. The focus on social enterprises as key in local economic development supports a full-circle approach that ensures actions are sustained and owned by individuals and local communities.

For more information on the CRP and its partners, visit:

<https://www.pioj.gov.jm/programmes/community-renewal-programme/>