

What is the Learning for Life Programme About ?

At the core of the Learning for Life Programme is a literacy and numeracy computer based programme. There are two other components which are Life Skills Training and Mentorship

The auto- skills programme runs off of a central server and brings world class literacy training to inner city communities where the high risk "corner "youths live, often isolated by warring gangs and a lack of bus fares.

The programme uses a three step approach. Step one provides a snapshot of each student's reading ability relative to his grade level in order to prescribe the student's individualized training programme.

During training, students progress at their own pace to master foundation reading skills. Step two allows for students progress to be closely monitored identifying common errors, response time and total time on task. This information is captured in student level classroom and school report available to educator.

The third step of the programme uses the results of the monitoring stage to intervene by modifying the training programme to meet individual student needs. By continuously adapting and adjusting students' needs in real time Auto Skills Programme is able to deliver a highly in-

dividualized training experience, which maximizes learning time and helps each student, get the most out of the programme.

Logistics for the Computer Programme

Hope Worldwide (a NGO) currently houses the server site that hosts the computer programme. The site offers 24 hours access to the programme seven days per week .

Each community site is linked to the system by a DSL line provided by Cable and Wireless Ltd. From this central server site the programme is fed remotely to work stations in the various locations via the internet. The current locations are in the following areas: Rose Town, Rema, Mountain View, Barry Street, Flankers and Heroes Circle.

Minimum requirement for Community site

- * 4-5 computer workstations with DSL lines
- * User licenses (5-10 users)
- * A Centre Manager/ Facilitator
- * One on-call technical person (with computer skills)

Goal

To build sustainable peace in violence-torn communities of Jamaica by providing the training that will enable employment to at- risk youths who would otherwise engage in violent activities

Objectives

- .1) To enable at- risk youths aged 15-24 to achieve literacy and numeracy competency through a computer

based learning programme.

- 2) To recruit 25-40 persons per center and to expand the existing centers .

- 3) To communicate life-skills to all participants in the literacy and numeracy programme.

- 4) To develop a sports intervention to increase participation in the programme and train coaches to be mentors to the participants.

- 5) To develop partnerships with community, NGO, and private sector organizations to ensure sustainability of the programme.

- 6) To perform a pre- and post- assessment to evaluate the program's effectiveness and the change in the reduction of violent-related injuries and deaths.

Programme Completion

At the end of the programme graduates are linked with external institutions such as HEART/NTA, automobile, other vocational institutions, and the private sector which afford additional training and/or job placement opportunities

(Pictured Above: L-R- Dr. Elizabeth Ward, Chairman of the VPA, Superintendent Delroy Hewitt; Commanding Officer of the Kingston Western Division and Ms. Canille Facey Senior Representative from LIME Jamaica . The three were cutting ribbon, opening the Learning for Life Programme in Hannah Town)



Meet Tony

Tony was born and raised in the inner city by his mother until he was nine years of age. His education stopped at the nine grade achievement test when it was discovered that he was not registered at birth– a requirement by Government for entering high school. It was also discovered that his literacy level was too low.

He started the auto– skill reading programme in 2006 but was not enthused due to the inability to read. But being that the programme was computerized he became excited. It was noted by the trainers that his interaction with the programme lead to his violent temper being curved. “The programme helped me to be more patient.” Tony completed 75% of the programme and is now able to read fluently.

In 2007 seventeen year old Tony sat the HEART TRUST NTA entrance test and passed the English test with a mark of 34 out of 50 questions. The following month he sat a reading test on a construction site and is now employed there.

Meet Asha

Asha's literacy level was way below average .All she was able to do is spell her first name with one 'e' and the word cat and dog. Asha however, entered the world of sex and sexuality with a gun to her head by the 'don's' right hand man. This led to her not liking herself and not been able to cope in school.As a result she became unproductive.

She started the auto-skill reading programme in 2006 and she was excited only because of the presence of male teachers and that she was not around her peers. Gradually through the programme and attendance at various workshops it was noticed that her focused changed especially after winning a reading certificate from the Academy of Awards. The programme helped her develop self worth and self- appreciation as it kept on encouraging her at times when she was struggling.

After completing 65 % of the programme in 2007 Adeena sat the HEART TRUST NTA test and passed. She now writes and reads above average level.

Meet Jason

Born and raised by his mother and father in upper Rose Town, with a heritage of his father being a gang leader and Jason his successor, Jason's education stopped at age 12. This was particularly due to his heritage as he could no longer go to school because he was a prime target for violence. He was only safe in his community. Even though he lived less than ½ mile from neighbouring high schools he could not attend as they were located across the border lines. He had to stay at home.

Jason on the other hand showed an eagerness to learn and to do graphics so he was encouraged to come to the center office not just for the auto skill but so that he could be taught graphics. At the center he spent most of his time learning how to read as the programme fascinated him and kept him enthused. Jason had another problem though, as his peers and fellow gang members were not impressed by him not hanging out with them anymore and even made threats at him. This did not stop him from coming to the center.

Jason started the auto-skill reading programme in 2006. With his love for graphics, drawing and the skills achieved during his involvement with the Area Youth Project, Jason became glued to the auto skill programme as he saw it as his gate way to accomplishing his dream of going to the Edna Manley College of the Visual Arts.

Throughout the auto skill program it was observed that Andre was struggling a lot as he had to deal with the pressure of being a gang leader and as such was sometimes absent from the programme. His involvement in the programme however, helped him develop a very strong sense of will and courage to approach his father about not wanting to follow his footsteps.

The auto-skills programme pointed out to Jason the fact that he had the power to overcome and to make his own decisions. Since the programme is self taught Jason was able to pause when frustrated or stop when can't be bothered. The trainers also pointed out to him that he was in charge and that the quicker he accomplished each task the closer he got to his dreams. This was a big thing for Jason.

Jason is now able to read fluently and write to a point where he is now working with a local bakery as a delivery guy. He still has his dreams; but now knows that nothing happens over night.

“From the time I came to Kingston YMCA I have been learning to read and write. Before that when I was in primary school I never knew how to do so. But coming to the Kingston YMCA helped me to pick up. On the computer I learnt how to rhyme and make up words”- male teenager at Kingston YMCA.

“The Programme has helped the children tremendously in my class because I have a lot of slow learners and since being placed on the programme, they have enhanced their appreciation for learning new words and their speech and vocabulary has improved greatly

The children are very enthused about the programme and it also helps me feel good about teaching.. I would like to see this programme continue because it helps bring students to a standard where they can read and speak fluently.” Rose Brown, Trainer Kingston Y.M.C.A.