



**PROJECT  
STAR**

Project STAR  
Year Three  
June 2024 - May 2025



# PROJECT STAR

Project STAR is a social and economic development initiative created by the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ) in partnership with the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and driven by communities to bring about societal transformation through targeted interventions in under-resourced areas of Jamaica.



Project STAR's work is supported by our valued donors and partners:

## GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



## LEGACY



## SIGNATURE



## LEADING



## PATRON



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# HOW WE WORK

We believe that with collective action across the society, we can realise a shared vision of Jamaica in which everyone is valued and has the opportunity to thrive.

Collaboration and consultation are at the heart of our approach, which ensures that needs as well as solutions are identified and implemented by the communities themselves. In turn, Project STAR works with our partners - communities, government agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and private sector entities and individuals at home and in the diaspora - to connect communities with the services and resources that were agreed on during a process of consultation. We have created a rigorous process of feedback, review, learning and improvement so the projects which are undertaken remain relevant and can be owned by the community. Our deep-seated commitment to achieving substantive and sustained change at the community level is demonstrated by ongoing accountability and reporting.





MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIR, KEITH DUNCAN

As we close Year 3 of Project STAR, I am proud to share some reflections on a year defined by meaningful impact. Our work has deepened across all five STAR communities, each of which has now successfully developed and signed off on its Community Transformation Action Plan (CTAP). This milestone shows not only our commitment to participatory, community-led development but also the power of community-owned leadership.

During the year over 1,100 residents were actively involved in shaping these CTAPs, and more than 6,000 people accessed social support services. This level of participation has validated that the STAR approach works – when people lead their development, they can bring about real change for themselves and their families.

The numbers tell a powerful story. In Year 3 alone, we trained 264 individuals in job readiness and placed 214 in meaningful employment. Our entrepreneurship efforts resulted in over 180 entrepreneurs – along with new and existing businesses – completing business development training, and over 400 people benefitting from business development programmes.

**Of major note are the results on crime. Across STAR communities, major crimes have decreased significantly, with reductions of up to 80% in some communities, compared to the previous year.** This is a clear sign that when economic opportunity, social protection, and community leadership align, safety and wellbeing will result.

We are also heartened by the increasing trust and engagement of government agencies, whose collaboration signals growing institutional confidence in the STAR model.

Looking ahead to Year 4, we will scale what works: more targeted training, deeper employer partnerships, strengthened case management, and greater youth engagement. STAR is no longer a pilot – it is a tested and scalable model of national transformation.

**To our communities, partners, and team – thank you. Your belief in Project STAR has made the journey possible.** Together, we are not just making progress – we are building a Jamaica where every community can thrive.



MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIR, Dr KEVIN BLAKE, commissioner of police

As co-chair of Project STAR, I'm delighted to reflect on the remarkable progress we've made in our communities over the past year. Our partnership with local stakeholders, community organisations, and residents has been instrumental in driving meaningful change. The Jamaica Constabulary Force's collaboration with STAR has yielded significant results, with a notable reduction in crime and violence in the areas we've targeted.

This achievement is a testament to the power of partnership and community-led initiatives. By working together, we've been able to identify and address the root causes of crime, provide support to vulnerable populations, and foster a sense of safety and security that's essential for our communities to thrive.

As commissioner of police, I'm acutely aware of the challenges we face in keeping our communities safe. However, Project STAR's holistic approach has shown us that crime reduction is not solely the

responsibility of the police. It requires a collective effort, with all stakeholders playing a vital role. I'm heartened by the enthusiasm and commitment shown by our community partners, who have worked tirelessly to implement programmes and initiatives that tackle the underlying issues driving crime. Our police officers have also been actively engaged in community outreach and engagement, building trust and fostering relationships that are critical to our success.

As we move forward, we're committed to building on this momentum. We'll continue to work collaboratively with our partners to identify areas of need, develop targeted interventions, and evaluate our progress. I'm confident that together, we can create safer, more resilient communities that offer opportunities for all. I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone involved in Project STAR for their dedication and hard work. Let's continue to strive for a brighter future for Jamaica.



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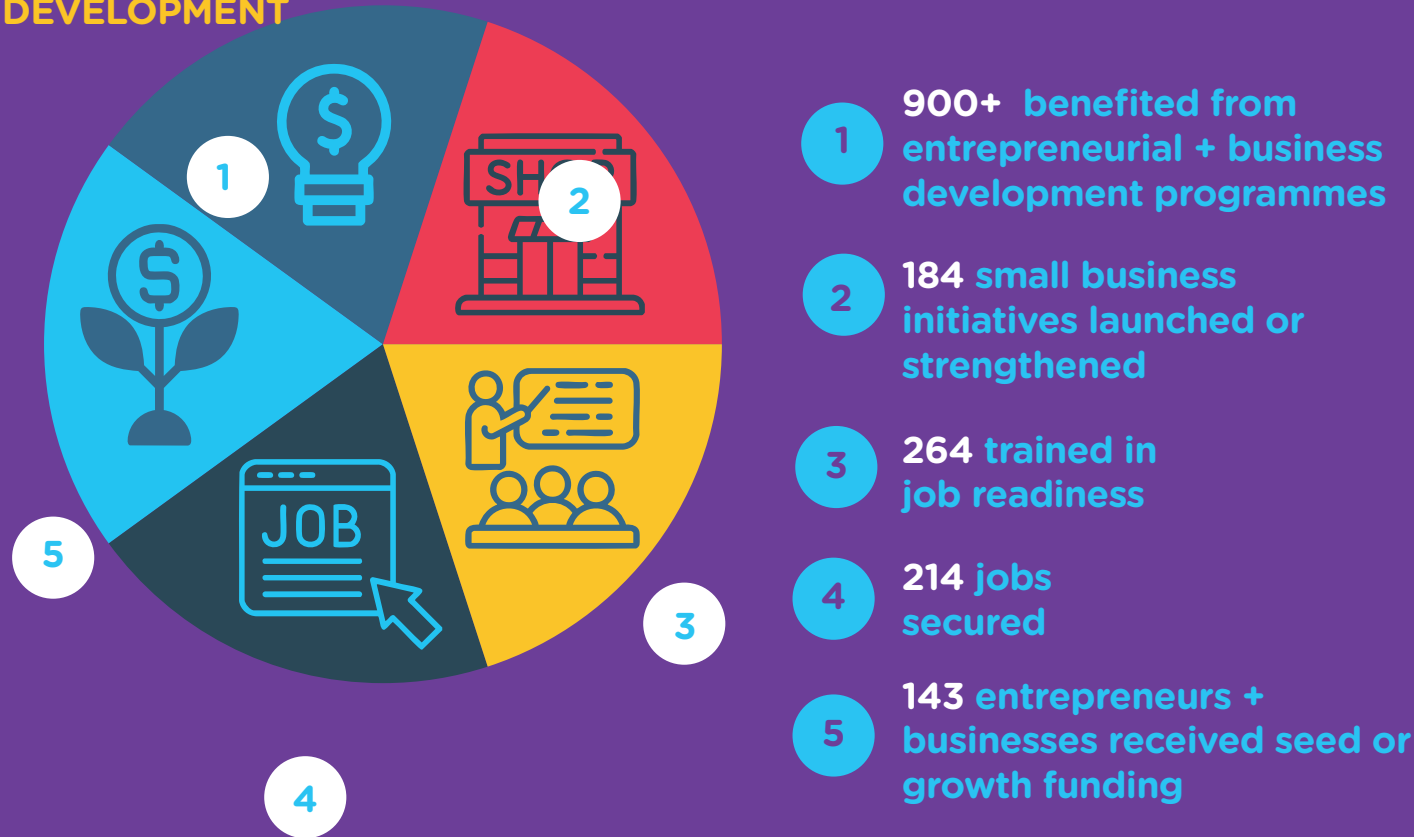
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STAR facilitated 6,400+ resident engagements in the past year.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



COMMUNITY-LED ACTION & PARTNERSHIPS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | project director, SAFFREY BROWN

Year 3 marked an important milestone for Project STAR as we witnessed remarkable progress across our five targeted communities — Rose Gardens, Parade Gardens, May Pen West, Savanna-la-Mar and Salt Spring. Through sustained, evidence-based programming grounded in our three core thematic areas, we have not only met but exceeded many of our ambitious targets, driven by the mobilisation and participation of residents in their own development journey.

The foundation for positive social and economic change has grown stronger throughout the year, with communities demonstrating increased agency in driving their own development agendas. During this time, we sought to strengthen systems whilst deepening impact.

**Community engagement deepened and became more structured:** Project STAR strengthened trust across its communities, with over 6,000 resident engagements through group and individual outreach. More than 1,100 residents contributed to the development and validation of all five Community Transformation Action Plans (CTAPs), which are now being implemented.

**This shift toward resident-led development signals stronger, more inclusive community governance.**

**Social protection targets were exceeded; service delivery systems matured:** With 6,465 people participating in social protection initiatives, STAR exceeded its annual target by 325% and its three-year cumulative goal by 116%. Community Hubs delivered health checks, financial services, reproductive education, and ID registration. New systems, such as a refined internal screening tool, enabled STAR to better match services to individual needs. The Afternoon Care Programme, school-based support, and emergency responses further strengthened STAR’s holistic, data-driven approach to inclusion.

**Economic empowerment scaled with job placements and small business growth.** Over 900 people benefited from employment, training, or entrepreneurial support. STAR trained 264 residents in job readiness and secured jobs for 214. Although overall training numbers fell short, a restructured training model was introduced, featuring industry-aligned tracks such as Skills



Training, Partner-Based Training, and Fast-Track upskilling. These set the foundation for greater success in Year 4.

**Community governance and leadership were revitalised:** STAR strengthened CBOs through governance and leadership training, achieving 123% of the annual capacity-building target. Parenting clubs became hubs for positive parenting, micro-enterprise, and community action. Many clubs formalised operations, collected dues, and initiated cleanups and fundraisers – signs of rising self-reliance and sustainability.

**Crime dropped significantly; trust in justice systems improved. Major crimes fell by up to 80% in some STAR communities.** This progress was underpinned by consistent youth programming, family support, and access to justice services. Two new MOUs with the Ministries of National Security and Justice expanded STAR’s integration with formal systems, boosting access to restorative justice, victim services, and legal aid.

**Cross-sector partnerships became more strategic and formal:** STAR solidified relationships with key ministries and agencies. Stakeholder engagement exceeded targets, enabling a more effective delivery of wraparound services. These partnerships positioned STAR as a trusted community intermediary and expanded its institutional reach.

**Data systems and evaluation capacity were strengthened:** A new participant screening tool improved targeting, while a process evaluation by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is underway. STAR also enhanced its monitoring and learning systems, shifting from activity tracking to change-oriented measurement. This prepares the initiative for deeper impact analysis and long-term scaling.

**STAR’s model is now ready for replication:** With tested systems, strong community structures, and integrated programming, Project STAR offers a nationally relevant model for community transformation. Lessons from Year 3 have informed Year 4 strategies including more robust case management, targeted training pathways, and expanded youth engagement.

**We extend our deepest thanks to all our partners: community members, government agencies, private sector allies, and civil society organisations,** whose commitment and collaboration made this year of progress possible. Your belief in the vision of Project STAR and your steadfast support have helped us move from ideas to action, and from action to measurable change. As we look ahead, we reaffirm our commitment to walking this journey alongside the communities we serve: supporting their leadership, investing in their potential, and working together to build a Jamaica

# With job interviews, Practice makes Perfect

So, you have applied for the job...

You are dreaming of financial independence and unlocking a new level of empowerment. You know that in order to achieve this, you must ace the interview, but you are nervous. What will you say? What will you wear? What if you don’t know the answers to the questions? Navigating the first steps in creating a life of success can be daunting. But as with perfecting any skill or ability, practice makes perfect. This is also true along one’s professional journey. Whether through on-the-job training or shadowing a seasoned colleague, we are all encouraged to practice on the job; so why not practice to secure the job?

The Sandals Foundation is a longstanding partner of Project STAR. With an annual injection of \$10-million dollars for five years, the philanthropic arm, along with its parent company – Sandals Resorts International – have committed to creating positive social outcomes in vulnerable communities and improving local infrastructure.

Pulling on the expertise of members of the Learning & Development team of Sandals Corporate University at Sandals Resorts, the Sandals Foundation joined the work readiness phase of the programme to help our island’s young people set the tone for how they present themselves in the work world.



In Westmoreland and St. Elizabeth, tips on how to prepare a solid job letter, a pointed resume, and deliver a memorable interview, helped to prime confident candidates on the verge of unlocking their dreams.

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,” says Patrice Gilpin, public relations manager at the Sandals Foundation. “And building the capacity of our young people to put their best foot forward, confident in their unique voice and unmatched potential, is a key area in which we invest.”

Mock interviews create a low-pressure environment offering real time feedback, identification of strengths and weaknesses, and space to improve communication skills. Candidates practice sitting in front of a panel and benefit from one-on-one sessions for direct feedback.

“Having the opportunity to make mistakes in a safe space helps to build self-esteem, increase confidence and improve deportment,” says Gilpin. “Access to exposure is invaluable and we are honoured to be part of the journey.”

Social transformation and renewal at a personal level begins with developing the confidence to create and take advantage of opportunities. And when it comes to landing that job or brokering a new business deal, your interpersonal presence is where one shines.

Let’s practise.



# Musson Foundation: Investing in solutions, empowering communities

At the Musson Foundation, we believe in Jamaica, and we believe in Jamaicans. That's why we were among the first to back Project STAR, underscoring our belief in the project's vision: to create citizen-led transformation in underserved communities. We are proud of our ongoing contributions to Project STAR's mission, which spans three pillars: social protection and inclusion, local economic development, and community-led action.

There were over 6,400 impactful resident engagements in STAR-led or -supported programmes this year. Whether through employment training, literacy support, or psychosocial care, these initiatives align with our own values of equity, empowerment, and long-term transformation. These aren't just numbers. They represent lives changed and communities reclaiming a sense of agency and hope.

For us, supporting Project STAR means more than financial support. It means showing up, listening, and investing in real solutions that uplift people where they are. That's what led us to sponsor the East Downtown Kingston School Feeding Programme – a targeted intervention to combat absenteeism among early childhood students.

With support from other partners such as Rainforest Caribbean, four schools – Parade Gardens Pre-Preparatory School, Highholborn Street Basic School, Real Success Early Childhood Institution, Calabar Infant and Primary School – received regular food donations. During the pilot phase alone, more than 11,500 meals were served to nearly 200 students. Attendance improved significantly. Teachers reported better concentration, healthier students, and stronger engagement.

For many schools, the programme also resulted in savings that were redirected toward much-needed supplies and utilities.

We didn't stop there. Recognising that food security requires long-term thinking, we worked with Project STAR and the communities and schools to stage the Community Cooking Lab to equip parents and school staff with the knowledge and tools to prepare nutritious meals with donated ingredients. This holistic approach ensures that healthy eating habits start at school and extend into the home.

We are now taking this commitment one step further. With a grant from the American Friends of Jamaica (AFJ), we are expanding our support of the school feeding programme through the creation of school-based community gardens. This new initiative will equip the same four schools with garden tools, soil, seeds, and compost systems, allowing them to grow their own fresh produce on-site. The gardens will be fully integrated into school meal plans, reducing dependence on food donations over time and promoting self-sufficiency. Students and staff will receive training in gardening and food preparation, aligning with the early childhood curriculum and reinforcing lifelong skills in sustainability, nutrition, and agricultural literacy. By investing in these gardens, we're not only nourishing students today – we're helping schools build the systems to feed their students tomorrow.

At Musson Foundation, we continue to show up for communities in times of need. In the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, we worked hand-in-hand with Project STAR to deliver crisis support to affected families. This kind of responsiveness underscores why we value this partnership: STAR doesn't just run programmes – it listens, adapts, and acts swiftly to reach those most in need. As a long-term partner of Project STAR, we see our role not just as a donor, but as a collaborator – one that walks alongside schools, parents, students, and community leaders to co-create the future they want to see. Because when we invest in people – when we equip them with the resources and support

# PROJECT STAR's THEMATIC AREAS

1



**SOCIAL PROTECTION AND  
INCLUSION**

2



**LOCAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
(LED)**

3



**COMMUNITY-LED ACTION  
+ PARTNERSHIPS FOR  
DEVELOPMENT**

# Expanding access to essential services

In Year 3, Project STAR facilitated 6,465 engagements with participants through our social protection and inclusion initiatives representing 325% of our annual target and 116% of the three-year cumulative goal. These figures reflect both growing interest in STAR programmes and increased community capacity to act on their own needs.

Our Community Hubs continued to anchor service delivery. Across all five communities, hubs hosted multiple events, serving over 1,200 residents with health checks, reproductive health education, civil registration, social services, and financial inclusion.

The May Pen West Hub saw the highest turnout with 370 attendees, thanks to a festival-style format that blended services with sport and entertainment.

“The festival brings communities together, promotes peace... It’s wonderful to see this happening in Havana Heights now.”

- Jermaine Jackson, May Pen West resident

In East Downtown Kingston, a collaboration with the National Commercial Bank (NCB) and the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) enabled residents to register for critical social benefits and open 16 new business bank accounts.

“Getting the opportunity today to get a business bank account means a lot for me – I can better manage my funds... apply for small business support, business grants and more.”

- Oraine Cunningham, Parade Gardens resident

6,465  
programme engagements  
in Year 3

325%  
of our annual target

116%  
of the three-year  
cumulative goal

In Salt Spring, the Birth Certificate Initiative helped 43 vulnerable residents (including 26 children and 17 adults) access official identification.



**Afternoon care programme**

This new initiative reached 30 households across Parade Gardens, May Pen West, Savanna-la-Mar, and Salt Spring. Through home visits, STAR identified families experiencing multi-generational challenges and delivered targeted support, such as:

- **PATH enrolment**
- **Employment support and business grants**
- **Care packages for Easter**
- **School re-integration assistance**

The programme’s targeted, home-based model enabled deeper insights and more responsive support.

**Emergency relief and donor contributions**

After Hurricane Beryl, fires and other shocks, through support from our partners, STAR delivered care packages of food and basic necessities to vulnerable families. These rapid interventions not only eased immediate hardship, but also reinforced community trust in STAR’s ability to respond quickly and compassionately.

**Transforming educational outcomes**

The Savanna-la-Mar team oversaw the paving and beautification of Sir Clifford Primary School, improving the environment for 460 students and staff. Funded by the Bluefields Villas Foundation through the Rita Adrosko Trust, the \$8.4M investment expanded the project’s original scope.

Five summer school programmes supported 238 children (71% female, 29% male) across all five communities. Activities included academic enrichment and workshops from agencies like the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCDA), Jamaica Fire Brigade, and the JCF Community Safety and Security Branch.

**5 summer school programmes supported 238 children**

One of the most impactful interventions was the Grade 7 Academy at Holy Trinity High School. This multi-stakeholder initiative focuses on improving outcomes for some of Jamaica’s most vulnerable students, particularly those entering high school with very low literacy levels. Launched in September 2024, the three-year programme integrates literacy, numeracy, science, and the arts. Project STAR supports its delivery through funding for Dr. Faith Alexander, the Academy’s Instructional Leader. The Grade 7 Academy at Holy Trinity High showed strong results.

**Students gained 1.5 grade levels or more in reading within one term**

**Non-mastery in Mathematics dropped from 78% to 30%**

In Parade Gardens and Rose Gardens, school feeding programmes supported high attendance (at or above 80%), though homework programme participation dipped to ~65% by Year 3 Q4.

The Scotiabank Education Empowerment Programme (SEEP) at Holy Family Primary engaged 40 at-risk students through literacy, numeracy, psychosocial support, and nutrition. Participation peaked during Sports Day, and parenting workshops were well-attended. The baseline and exit data reflects noticeable improvement in the reading skills of the participating children with 46% reading at Grade 3 level at the end of two terms of intervention in comparison to the 17% at



baseline; and 55% reading at Grade 3 Level and above at exit compared to 17% at baseline.

Strengthening youth development

More than 540 youth participated in STAR-led and supported programmes this year, covering sports, leadership, education, and cultural engagement.

540+ youth participated in STAR-led and supported programmes

The Kicking Forward Football Programme expanded to Savanna-la-Mar and Salt Spring. In May Pen West, the Pennant Wood football team engaged 20 boys under 15 in structured night matches. Other initiatives included:

- **Gloves Over Guns: boxing sensitisation with 30 youth (24 males, 6 females) in Savanna-la-Mar**
- **Netball rallies in New Market Oval with 20 players**
- **Male “Reasoning Sessions” in Salt Spring with 25 participants**

“Seeing something like this, where there’s unity and togetherness, gives me hope.”  
- Akeem Walsh, community DJ and selector, Parade Gardens

“Now people can walk freely, enjoy themselves, and come out to watch the games. It’s bringing unity and peace to the people.”  
-Deputy Superintendent, Eucal Francis

The Inner-City Youth Task Force in Parade Gardens shifted from a male-dominated group to one of 34 girls and 4 boys — focusing on reading, sewing, and personal development. Similarly, LifeYard’s Empress Circle workshops in Parade Gardens trained 16 girls in creative, income-generating skills.

Leadership opportunities expanded through:

- **The EDTK Youth Council: 12 youth members from Parade Gardens and Rose Gardens**
- **The Savanna-la-Mar Youth Advocacy Network: 5 youth (3 males, 2 females)**
- **The Savanna-la-Mar Mentorship Programme: 30 participants (24 males, 6 females)**

Strengthening Family Support

Parenting clubs grew in reach and impact. In Rose Gardens, a leadership workshop revealed that 93% of parents already practised positive parenting. Clubs moved toward community action.

“With dedicated parents stepping forward as agents of change, Rose Gardens is poised for a brighter future, one where strong families lay the foundation for a safer, more resilient community”  
- Sharise Staines-Appleby, Community Services Lead

In Havana Heights, the Parenting Club ratified its constitution and took part in a seasoning product workshop with the Social Development Commission (SDC) to boost income-generating skills.

The Cooke Street Parenting Club in Savanna-la-Mar, comprising 19 members (3 males, 16 females), rapidly matured. Activities included:

- An empowerment brunch for 15 fathers
- SDC-led training in governance
- A cleanup of an abandoned church for future use
- Planning a six-a-side football competition as a fundraiser
- Parenting clubs have become essential support systems, offering training, referrals to government services, and safe spaces for families to grow.

Elder support also featured strongly. In Salt Spring, the Visionary Senior Citizens Club hosted “Ole Time Sinting Come Back Again”, celebrating heritage through cultural performances. In Seaton Crescent, senior residents accessed the National Water Commission (NWC) Amnesty (offering 100% write-offs for pensioners), enrolled in PATH, and connected with the Meals on Wheels programme.



# Training and Human Capital Development

In Year 3, Project STAR engaged 873 participants through employment placement, training, and business development support. A total of 264 residents benefitted from job readiness and industry-specific training, with strong success rates across communities.

873  
participants engaged  
in Year 3

264  
beneficiaries of  
training

The **May Pen cohort in Quarter 3 was the largest yet, graduating 44 young people through the Job Readiness Training Programme (JRTP)**. By January 2025, the programme had placed 231 individuals in employment overall, underscoring the success of earlier cohorts in Salt Spring, St James, and Savanna-la-Mar, Westmoreland, where 70% of Salt Spring graduates secured jobs within a month.

Beyond technical skills, the programme nurtured mindset transformation and renewed hope.

**“I have a one-year-old son, and I want to change my life so he can look up to me. This programme gave me a second chance.”**

- Kyle-Anthony Gardner, top performer from Cohort 6 in EDTK JRTP

**“It taught me how to prepare a resume, how to be confident, and how to really sell myself. Nothing tried is nothing done.”**

- Roasha Anderson, top female graduate from EDTK

Project STAR also piloted industry-specific hybrid training models. In Westmoreland, a partnership with Guardsman Group provided 18 participants with training in resume writing, hygiene, deportment, conflict resolution and financial literacy.



In collaboration with the D&G Foundation and DECS Management & Logistics Services Limited, a forklift operations training equipped 28 residents with technical and safety skills relevant to logistics and warehouse roles.

One graduate noted: **“Dedication and consistency are key. The skills I gained here are not just for work but for life in general.”**

Despite these successes, only 39% of the overall Year 3 training target was met. In response, STAR has revised its training framework for Year 4. The updated model prioritises Skills Training and Partner-Based Training over general job readiness approaches. Industry-specific programmes, modelled after the Production Worker success, will expand through partnerships in manufacturing, hospitality, security, and business process outsourcing (BPO). The Foundation Skills Pathway, in collaboration with HEART/NSTA Trust, will address gaps in literacy and numeracy. Meanwhile, Fast-Track pathways will support qualified participants needing only minimal upskilling, and Standard Job Readiness will be repositioned as



LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED)

preparatory support for those needing final polish before entering the workforce.

Employment successes and challenges

In total, 214 residents secured formal employment across industries including retail, manufacturing, waste management, customer service, education, logistics, hospitality, tourism, and utilities – achieving 66% of the Year 3 employment target.

STAR strengthened its employment strategy through expanded job fairs and employer outreach. **At the Salt Spring Open Day Employment Fair, 62 interviews were conducted, and 10 participants were placed on the spot.** STAR also facilitated attendance at external job fairs such as the ATL Automotive Group/Sandals Job Fair, helping to open doors for participants. The team focused on growing sectors like hospitality, BPO, and manufacturing.

Employer feedback has been consistently positive this year. Jhenelle Richards, lead talent recruiter at CB Group, noted that STAR graduates distinguish themselves through their professionalism and clear sense of purpose. **“I’m quite impressed with the focus and goal-oriented nature of the female candidates. Their grooming, confidence, and curiosity show that Project STAR is doing an excellent job.”**

Juici Patties has also become a key recruitment partner, with HR leads actively participating in STAR job fairs and expressing confidence in the calibre of STAR graduates. The programme’s impact is reflected in individual stories. Alicia Brown, a graduate from May Pen, explained: **“Before this training, I doubted myself. I didn’t think I could get a job because of where I’m from. But Project STAR helped build my confidence and showed me I have valuable skills.”**

In Year 4, STAR will deepen employer engagement and widen partnerships with companies across varied industries. One-on-one coaching will help reframe participant perceptions of entry-level jobs, while STAR

continues refining its pre-screening and referral processes to maintain high employer satisfaction.

Entrepreneurship and business development excellence

**Project STAR’s entrepreneurship arm exceeded its three-year target by over 17%, completing 83 entrepreneurial interventions and engaging over 970 participants in these interventions over three years.**

The HEART Entrepreneurship Level II Training certified 56 entrepreneurs from May Pen, Salt Spring, Parade Gardens, and Rose Gardens. Participants reported stronger customer service, marketing, and financial management skills – leading to improved revenue. In May Pen West, 70% of those who met the HEART competency standard formally registered their businesses with the Companies Office of Jamaica.

The Nano-Grant Programme provided entrepreneurial training for 72 youth-led businesses, with 43 receiving start up grants.

During a cohort survey analysing the effectiveness of the programme, 14 recipients of nano-grants (totalling J\$1.4M) were assessed and 79% of businesses remained operational after six months, collectively generating J\$8.04M in revenue.

Also notably, post-training assessments in Salt Spring showed a 167% average improvement in business planning knowledge, demonstrating the efficacy of the programme.

Sector-specific initiatives expanded reach:

- A Food Handlers’ Clinic, in partnership with the South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA), trained 46 residents from Treadlight, Havana Heights, and Racetrack/Pennant Wood in food safety, removing a key barrier to food-based entrepreneurship.
- A partnership with Hi-Pro supported 56 farmers in May Pen with poultry and crop



LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED)

supplies and training in sustainable farming.

A needs assessment of 11 cottage industry businesses in May Pen West identified constraints in marketing, record-keeping, supplier relationships, and financing. STAR used this data to develop targeted support plans tailored to each business. This workshop will be held at the start of Year 4. Market access was also improved through events like Community Round Robins in Parade Gardens, which connected 8 direct service providers and another 10 informal vendors (including sound system operators, DJs, food sellers, and shopkeepers) to new customers, helping to foster a networked, supportive business ecosystem.

Financial inclusion and strategic investments

Financial inclusion remained a cornerstone of STAR’s local economic development strategy, equipping residents with banking knowledge and connections to formal financial systems. In East Downtown Kingston, a session with NCB at the Community Hub resulted in 14 personal and 2 business accounts being opened. In Salt Spring, 50 student bank books were issued during sessions led by Infiniti Cooperative Credit Union, building youth financial literacy. In Savanna-la-Mar, JN Bank facilitated the opening of 14 accounts, primarily for small business owners and job seekers.

Broader partnerships with JN Bank, JMMB, and Scotiabank connected participants to personal and business banking, student savings, and investment options. Some limitations persisted due to bank classifications and documentation requirements, but significant progress was made in bridging the gap between underserved communities and the formal economy.

Business formalisation also advanced. In Quarter 4, seven entrepreneurs in May Pen

West demonstrated legal status through either HEART/NSTA Trust Micro Entrepreneur Certification or Companies Office registration – underscoring STAR’s support throughout the full business lifecycle.

Strategic investments further strengthened economic resilience. In Savanna-la-Mar, STAR co-funded a fish fry hosted by St. Mary’s Fishing Beach fisherfolk, aimed at raising a financial buffer against storms and disasters. The Wet Workz Music Studio in Parade Gardens received a J\$500,000 grant for refurbishment and modern recording equipment. Strategic meetings with the Wet Workz team supported the development of business plans and networking strategies to help transform the studio into a sustainable creative enterprise.



Gary Peart, chairman of Supreme Ventures Group, addresses a Job Readiness cohort

# Community Transformation Action Plans Implementation

The completion and validation of all five Community Transformation Action Plans (CTAPs) represents a breakthrough moment in our community development approach. These comprehensive plans, developed through extensive community consultation with over 3,500 residents (1,100 in year 3), offer a tailored roadmap for sustainable transformation rooted in community-defined priorities.

**5**  
**CTAPs completed and validated**

**3,500+**  
**residents involved in community consultations**

Engagement levels exceeded minimum representation targets and reflected genuine community ownership of the transformation process.

As Sharise Staines-Appleby, Project STAR community services lead, explained:

**“Through corner reasonings, walk-throughs, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, and surveys, community members identified their core issues and formulated strategies to address them.”**

While common themes such as weak family structures, unemployment, and limited access to social services emerged across all communities, each CTAP reflects unique community characteristics and opportunities.

**“At first, people were reluctant. But once we explained the purpose and how it could benefit the community, they began**

**to embrace it. They became engaged and receptive, actively contributing to the process.”** - Denise Johnson, Parade Gardens resident

## Strengthening community-based organisations

Year 3 saw the momentum of CTAP implementation continue. There were 49 instances of community-based organisations participating in capacity-building workshops, achieving 123% of the annual target. These workshops focused on comprehensive organisational development including record-keeping, leadership, governance, constitution development, strategic event planning, and entrepreneurship.

The Cooke Street Parenting Club exemplified the organisational maturity the initiative sought to foster, introducing club dues, allocating funds for branded apparel, hosting member-requested activities, and relocating to a more accessible venue. Members also initiated clean-up projects and planned fundraising events.

The Havana Heights Parenting Club showed similar leadership, coordinating several fundraisers and organising Easter care packages for 18 disabled and shut-in residents, with community sponsorship support. Their initiative to seek fundraising opportunities and work toward membership growth further demonstrated the kind of proactive leadership essential for long-term sustainability.

Labour Day projects highlighted growing collaboration across community groups. In Rose Gardens, 45 participants including youth from the Environmental Club and Kicking Forward Football Programme, and seniors from the Senior Citizens Club worked together on revitalisation projects. In Parade Gardens, the CDC partnered with the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) to clean gutters and revitalise the community centre, engaging 24 residents.



COMMUNITY-LED ACTION + PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT

In May Pen West, the Racetrack Police Youth Club (PYC) repainted the community entrance painting using materials provided by Project STAR, while the Havana Heights Parenting Club repaired the community centre's leaking roof, also using STAR-supplied materials.

In Salt Spring, the Community Development Committee (CDC) led a transformation of the old basic school into a multi-purpose hub, in partnership with JSIF, NROCC, Project STAR, local Members of Parliament, and community members.

These initiatives reflect growing community cohesion and the ability of residents to lead and implement their own solutions.

Year 3 marked a high point in institutional engagement, with STAR achieving 197% of its stakeholder involvement target. Partnerships deepened with a wide range of entities including the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), Kiwanis Club, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Social Development Commission (SDC), HEART/ NSTA Trust, National Council for Senior Citizens, and JSIF.

Two key Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were signed during the year – with the Ministry of National Security, reinforcing our collaboration on community safety, and with the Ministry of Justice, aimed at improving access to services such as Restorative Justice, Victim Support, Child Diversion, and the Legal Aid Council.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Hon. Delroy Chuck, Minister of Justice, noted:

“These services must be shaped by the realities of the communities– not imposed from outside but made relevant, accessible, and fully responsive.”

Restorative Justice sensitisation sessions were hosted across all STAR communities, raising awareness about certification and conflict resolution. These efforts aim to build community capacity to manage internal conflict and promote long-term cohesion. Looking ahead to Year 4, greater emphasis will

be placed on supporting certified facilitators and tracking how they contribute to strengthening local family and justice systems.

Crime reduction and community safety

STAR’s efforts enhanced wider crime reduction initiatives currently being undertaken nationally by the JCF. Results showed decreases that were greater than the national patterns, or trends that were higher or lower than national trends. For example, instances where crime categories may be increasing within STAR communities, these were increasing at a slower rate than nationally; likewise, if national trends showed a decreasing trend in a particular crime category, the rate of decline in STAR communities was greater. **There were significant decreases across all 5 STAR communities for the 12-month period between June 2024 and May 2025**, with a 12-month total of 56 crimes across all major crime categories – murder, shootings, aggravated assaults, robberies, break-ins, larcenies, and rapes. This compares with a 12-month total of 103 major crimes for June 2023-May 2024 for the same communities.

Parade Gardens had the most overall crimes with 18, followed by Salt Spring with 16, though the former shows an overall declining trend. Savanna-la-Mar had the fewest, with only 3 major crimes for the period. Only May Pen West did not record any murders for the period, though Salt Spring’s and Savanna-la-Mar’s murder trends over the period showed slight declines. The most common major crime was shootings (20; 35.7% of total), led by Salt Spring with 13. Acquisitive crimes – larceny, break-ins and robberies – accounted for another 20 crimes, led by Parade Gardens with 10. These crimes, along with shootings, show an increasing trend nationally, though in the STAR communities, the rates of increase are lower than the national pattern.

This transformative impact underscores the effectiveness of sustained social programming and community engagement in creating safer, more unified communities.

# MEET YOUR SUPREME COMMUNITY HEROES

Nicholas McKenzie  
Kritical's Defensive Driving School

I Am A SUPREME COMMUNITY HERO!

Matthew Prendergast  
founder, Jamaica Black Life

I Am A SUPREME COMMUNITY HERO!

Tishauna Mullings  
NexxStepp Lifelong Educational Services

I Am A SUPREME COMMUNITY HERO!

Tanisha Richards  
Tan Tan Wholesale Enterprises

I Am A SUPREME COMMUNITY HERO!

Abiathar Neita  
Neita's Funeral Services & Supplies

I Am A SUPREME COMMUNITY HERO!

After reviewing your nominations, Supreme Ventures Foundation is proud to introduce the Supreme Heroes finalists!

Follow us on social media to learn more about their training at the Mona Entrepreneurial Commercialisation Centre (MECC), their projects and their journey to the title of ultimate Supreme Hero.

@supremeventuresfoundation





# Looking Forward

## Challenges and adaptive responses

Year 3 presented significant challenges that tested our adaptive capacity and resilience. Hurricane Beryl and Tropical Storm Rafael disrupted normal programming, particularly impacting vulnerable populations including seniors and children. Our rapid response included needs assessments, distribution of care packages, and collaboration with partners to establish satellite charging stations and supply distribution points.

Community violence near May Pen West (July–September) and ongoing security issues in Rose Gardens (April) led to the postponement or cancellation of activities. In response, the Ministry of Justice Victim Services Unit provided counselling and support, and our team enhanced safety protocols and contingency planning measures.

### Programmatic adaptations and learning

Throughout the year, we continuously refined our approaches based on experience and community feedback. A revised internal screening tool enabled comprehensive assessment of participants’ socioeconomic conditions, risk indicators, and competencies—ensuring more targeted support and guiding individuals to the most appropriate interventions.

To address challenges with participant mobilisation and varying competency levels in our training and employment programme, we introduced industry-specific training pathways and improved pre-screening. The success of the entrepreneurship

programme prompted its expansion into new communities, along with more robust evaluation mechanisms to assess long-term impact. Insights from the nano-grant programme assessment will guide improvements, including better-aligned disbursement timing.

There was a deliberate increase in capacity-building sessions with Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), covering leadership, record-keeping, roles and responsibilities - part of our efforts to improve their functionality and respond to the programming decline noticed during the year.

In the latter half of the year, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) commenced a process evaluation of Project STAR, expected to conclude in Year 4. The report will provide insights to strengthen programming, guide national and regional scalability, and propose methodologies to assess long-term project impact.

### Enhanced community ownership and sustainability

As we transition into Year 4, our focus will be on strengthening community ownership of transformation initiatives and building sustainable systems that extend beyond the project’s direct implementation. This includes supporting the registration of all CBOs with the Social Development Commission and the Department of Cooperatives and Friendly Societies, ensuring they are fully functional, well-governed, and officially recognised.



We will assess strategies to increase youth engagement while addressing parental concerns, and continue to share CTAP progression with community members, institutional stakeholders, and the political directorate to secure long-term support. There will also be greater regularity in community committee and CTAP review meetings.

We will implement more comprehensive evaluation tools to assess the medium-term impact of interventions, allowing for more refined support strategies. Enhanced monitoring systems will be critical in addressing gaps and maximising impact, with a greater emphasis on change indicators across our performance management framework—shifting from activity tracking to long-term transformation.

**Economic development expansion**

Our local economic development strategy will address job placement challenges identified in Year 3 through expanded employer partnerships and strengthened career counselling services.

We will implement a revised training framework that prioritises Skills Training and Partner-Based Training pathways over traditional job readiness models. Industry-specific programmes, modelled on the successful Production Worker Training Programme, will be scaled. The Foundation Skills pathway will also be expanded through enhanced partnerships with HEART/NSTA Trust to address literacy and numeracy gaps. Each Project STAR community will receive customised training tailored to its local economic opportunities and participant profiles, supported by annual Training Expos and semi-annual Community Work Centres as outlined in the CTAPs.

Entrepreneurship programmes will scale based on community demand, with a focus on expanding the nano-grant programme using findings from recent assessments. In Parade Gardens, the music studio development initiative will be completed, creating new economic opportunities for youth in the creative sector.

**Social Protection System Strengthening**

Our approach to social protection will be refined through the full implementation of the revised screening tool and expansion of case management and social services capacity. We will scale sustainable frameworks for Community Hub service delivery into a quarterly target, committing to at least two hubs per community each quarter. This will accelerate progress on civil registration and build on the successful model piloted in Year 3.

The Afternoon Care programme will be assessed to determine its reach among vulnerable households, with targeted interventions to boost participation. School-based programmes will be strengthened through improved parental engagement and better systems to track attendance and academic progress.

Case management strategies will be developed or adopted to enhance school engagement and provide tailored support to vulnerable households.

We will also formalise new partnerships with government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and private sector partners in key programming areas. Communications and marketing efforts will be enhanced to effectively share project goals, highlight available programmes, and amplify success stories. This will include regular press releases, strategic marketing to attract new donors and partners, and increased transparency and accountability.



It's thanks to the support of our programme partners,  
that Project STAR can deliver impactful interventions in communities.

| Government Ministries                                        | Agencies                                                                               | Non-Governmental Organisations                    | Corporate Partners                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ministry of National Security                                | National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA)                                                  | Child Resiliency Programme (CRP)                  | Thompson's Haulage                  |
| Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information         | National Health Fund (NHF)                                                             | Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA)                | DECS Management & Logistics Limited |
| Ministry of Health and Wellness                              | Office of the Registrar-General, NIRA (OR-G) (formerly Registrar General's Department) | Council of Voluntary Social Services (CVSS)       | Guardsman Group                     |
| Ministry of Labour and Social Security                       | Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA)                                    | JMMB Foundation                                   | LCH Development                     |
| Ministry of Local Government & Community Development (MLGCD) | Social Development Commission (SDC)                                                    | D&G Foundation                                    | Discount Lumber                     |
|                                                              | Universal Service Fund (USF)                                                           | Joe and Angella Whitter Foundation                | National Supply Limited             |
|                                                              | Planning Institute Of Jamaica (PIOJ)                                                   | Inter-American Development Bank Group (IDB Group) | Carib Cement                        |
|                                                              | Rural Agricultural Development Agency (RADA)                                           | Jamaica Centre of Tourism Innovation (JCTI)       | Steve Urchin                        |
|                                                              | National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC)                                           | Gloves Over Guns                                  | Murray's Fish & Jerk Hut            |
|                                                              | National Council for Senior Citizens (NCSC)                                            | LifeYard                                          | Zuri Investments                    |
|                                                              |                                                                                        |                                                   | Sanmerna                            |
|                                                              |                                                                                        |                                                   | Western Sports                      |



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