



# PROJECT STAR

Project STAR  
Quarterly Report  
Year Four, Q1  
June - August 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.



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Key Achievements for Year 4, Quarter 1

SOCIAL PROTECTION & INCLUSION



SOCIAL PROTECTION & INCLUSION



COMMUNITY LED ACTION & PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT







## Executive summary

Year four, quarter one marked the start of a new programme year for Project STAR, supported by a strengthened Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework, improved programming and restructured teams designed to increase efficiency and impact. Across the five target communities (Rose Gardens, Parade Gardens, May Pen West, Savanna-la-Mar and Salt Spring), STAR continued to advance work in social protection and inclusion, local economic development and community-led initiatives.

Performance across social protection and inclusion was mixed, with youth engagement standing out as significantly exceeding its targets. Four community medical hubs provided essential health services to 257 residents (64 percent of target) and SPARK! Summer Camps engaged 107 students (42 percent). Residents also accessed back-to-school support, civil documentation, psychosocial services, literacy and numeracy pathways, and school reintegration. The growing demand for psychosocial support highlighted the need for more consistent, trauma-informed approaches across programmes.

**Local economic development recorded the strongest outcomes this quarter.** Sixty-five residents gained formal employment (62 percent of target), bringing total placements to 401. Job Readiness Training reached 142 residents (47 percent) including the first employer-partnered training with IBEX in May Pen. **Salt Spring’s training model achieved a 92 percent completion rate with 39 percent male participation, the highest to date in that community.** Entrepreneurship support remained robust, with **21 Cottage Industry members receiving capacity-**

**building, 57 residents completing Nano Grant workshops, 16 farmers supported with RADA identification and three new bank accounts opened.** These activities resulted in **94 percent attainment of the quarterly entrepreneurship target.**

Community-wide engagement continued through events such as the “Big Man Tings” workshop, Senior Citizens Club meetings, job fairs, youth club activities and football tournaments. Community Transformation Boards met in three communities and Community Intervention Teams met in four. The Salt Spring CDC also led community fundraising for a new meeting space and hosted a well-attended summer camp. Some community groups continue to require strengthened governance and increased resident participation, and further work will be done to support CBOs to become fully operational and registered before STAR transitions from the communities.

The quarter was shaped by unprecedented operational challenges during August and the lead-up to the general election on September 3. The election period created a different operating environment, with political campaigns drawing much of the community’s attention and, at times, affecting mobilisation efforts. As Project STAR enters quarter two, the strategic focus will shift towards scaling successful models and addressing the gaps identified during this reporting period. This includes the coordinated rollout of HEART/ NSTA Trust training programmes, reactivation of Police Youth Clubs and establishment of other youth clubs, and expansion of psychosocial support systems. Lessons learned from quarter one provide a stronger foundation for the important work ahead.



# PROJECT STAR's THEMATIC AREAS

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**SOCIAL PROTECTION AND  
INCLUSION**



**LOCAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
(LED)**



**COMMUNITY-LED ACTION**



Social protection initiatives remain central to STAR’s goal of strengthening household stability, promoting inclusion and improving overall wellbeing. During Quarter 1, support was delivered through community hubs, case management, school reintegration, specialised literacy and numeracy pathways, psychosocial services and back-to-school assistance. Together, these interventions addressed immediate needs while laying the groundwork for long-term resilience and more equitable access to opportunities.

Community Hubs

**Four Community Medical Hubs** were held across Savanna-la-Mar, May Pen West, Salt Spring and Rose Gardens, **reaching more than 257 participants**. These hubs offered essential health screenings, vaccinations and medical checks, helping families prepare for the new academic year and reducing barriers to school readiness.

Partnerships with the Ministry of Health and Wellness and local churches, including the New Testament Church of God (Havana Heights), Salt Spring United Church and Pentab Church, ensured a coordinated approach. Each hub offered services tailored to local needs, with provisions for children, educators and broader community members.

Psychosocial Support

Psychosocial support continued to evolve as a core component of STAR’s social protection work. Although the formal Case Management Programme is scheduled for launch in quarter three, initial mobilisation began this quarter. In Savanna-la-Mar, 23 individuals received support and seven referrals were made to agencies such as the Victim Services Division, Restorative Justice, National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) and the Teen Clinic. Cases reflected a range of issues, including grief, academic underperformance, family instability and financial hardship. Nine clients declined counselling despite evident need.

- The Afternoon Care Programme continued to provide household-level support across communities. Examples include:
- A Rose Gardens family of four receiving counselling referrals, mentoring for their son and employment support for parents.
  - Two Parade Gardens residents receiving assistance for issues related to trauma, communication and employment readiness.
  - Multiple Salt Spring households addressing unstable guardianship, school disengagement and social assistance needs. One family successfully transitioned out of support following improvements in employment, school re-enrolment, and overall household stability

In response to increasing psychosocial needs among job training participants, the Parade Gardens team developed a six-month engagement strategy, with monthly check-ins scheduled for August 2025 to January 2026. The pilot focuses on emotional regulation and resilience, self-perception and hopefulness, and support systems. The partner network includes NCDA, Victim Services, Restorative Justice, JCF Community Safety and Security Branch (CSSB), Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA), faith-based organisations and NGOs.

Education and School Support

As this was the summer reporting period, STAR focused on keeping young people engaged and supporting a smooth transition into the new school year. In Savanna-la-Mar, out-of-school youth were supported to begin pathways back into education, including enrolment processes for nationally recognised equivalency programmes, access to school supplies, and assistance with essential documentation. Additional support also enabled the successful reintegration of a young person into formal schooling.

**SPARK! Youth Innovation Summer Camp operated in East Downtown Kingston, May Pen West and Savanna-la-Mar, providing 117 young people with skills training, entrepreneurship**







**sensitisation and life skills development.** Sessions such as the Business Model Canvas, “Who Am I?” self-reflection activities, AI and STEM exposure and practical career demonstrations supported both academic and personal development. Behavioural shifts were observed across several locations, particularly in May Pen West and Savanna-la-Mar, where young people expressed feeling valued, motivated and more hopeful.

**Salt Spring CDC hosted the largest camp, engaging 141 children aged 4-16.** The programme included academic reinforcement, life skills and exposure sessions with the

Jamaica Defence Force, Jamaica Fire Brigade, NCDA and Restorative Justice. Many out-of-age attendees participated due to food insecurity, underscoring ongoing vulnerabilities.

Back-to-school support was provided across all communities. Interventions included medical checks, distribution of supplies, and support from partners such as Scotia Foundation, Innercity Youth Task Force and community clubs. Turnout varied due to short mobilisation time, election activity, weather and competing family demands. Families expressed appreciation for the support.

*Civil Registration and Social Support*

Civil documentation is a fundamental enabler of economic participation and social inclusion. Access to essential documents, such as birth certificates and national identification, enables individuals to fully participate in civic life. Although no documentation hubs were held this quarter, targeted follow-up revealed ongoing challenges with compliance. A documentation gap analysis identified residents needing support with birth certificates, National ID cards and TRN cards. Assistance was provided to secure two birth certificates, one ID card application (self-completed) and two TRN cards. Documentation support was also provided through school re-engagement efforts and Job Readiness Training (JRT).

Social assistance programmes are also foundational to social inclusion and equitable development. During the quarter, three households were referred to PATH, and three completed registration. One senior citizen in Salt Spring also began receiving Meals on Wheels through the National Council for Senior Citizens, following a referral earlier in the year.





THEMATIC AREA 2 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development continues to be a defining pillar of STAR’s mission to build sustainable pathways for community transformation. During quarter one, residents engaged in a wide range of activities that strengthened employability, expanded entrepreneurial capacity and enhanced access to financial services. In total, **142 residents participated in training programmes, 65 secured formal employment, 94 benefited from entrepreneurship and business development support.** These combined efforts are helping residents pursue meaningful livelihoods, reduce dependency and build long-term economic resilience. Training pathways remained central to STAR’s approach this quarter. **Five major training programmes were delivered across the communities,** reflecting a blend of standard Job Readiness Training, sector-specific preparation, employer-designed curricula and planned vocational programmes aligned with national training bodies.

**Salt Spring recorded some of the strongest results.** In partnership with HEART/NSTA Trust, the JMMB Joan Duncan Foundation and the National Council on Drug Abuse, **the community achieved a 92 percent completion rate among its 36 Job Readiness participants, the highest to date. Male participation reached 39 percent, also a record high.** Pre- and post-test assessments showed that **91 percent of participants rated the training positively.** Improvements to the learning environment, including enhanced internet coverage and classroom ventilation, contributed to the programme’s overall success. While outcomes were encouraging, mobilisation challenges remained. Some residents were unresponsive to outreach, while others required additional support with documentation, appropriate attire, and basic work-readiness skills. These trends reflect the shift toward later adopters who require more intensive engagement as STAR enters its fourth year.

Training in Rose Gardens and Parade Gardens followed three pathways: Job Readiness Training, Production Worker Training and the

Professional Edge Bootcamp. The national election period created significant constraints, with political activity dominating public space and requiring careful planning for safety in both communities. Despite this, Job Readiness Training remained strong. Rose Gardens achieved a 93 percent completion rate among its 14 participants, while Parade Gardens recorded a 91 percent completion rate among 21 participants. Male participation was high in Rose Gardens but more modest in Parade Gardens. Both communities recorded behavioural challenges among participants, particularly linked to trauma, emotional regulation difficulties and instances of substance use, which reinforced the importance of strong psychosocial support in all employment-related programming.

Production Worker Training generated considerable interest, especially among young men. Rose Gardens contributed 18 participants, with a predominantly male cohort and a completion rate of 78 percent. Parade Gardens recorded four participants and a 75 percent completion rate. Engagement among young men was notably high, yet attrition reflected competing pressures including informal income opportunities and political involvement during the reporting period. These insights indicate the need for more flexible training schedules and stronger mentorship support for young men. In contrast, the Professional Edge Bootcamp attracted only four participants from Parade Gardens and none from Rose Gardens, suggesting the model requires significant redesign to better meet community needs.

A key development this quarter was STAR’s first direct employer-partnered training programme, launched in May Pen West in collaboration with IBEX. The BPO Customer Service Training mobilised 65 residents, of whom 43 were screened and all completed the two-day training. Sixteen participants were assigned to accounts by the end of the quarter. Male representation remained low at 14 percent. The programme highlighted the gap between completing short courses and achieving employability, particularly regarding communication skills, customer





THEMATIC AREA 2 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

service capabilities and digital readiness. As a result, STAR and IBEX agreed to introduce a preparatory module lasting three to five days, establish clearer proficiency requirements and strengthen efforts to recruit men into the sector. The pilot laid valuable groundwork for future employer-driven training models across other industries.

The partnership with HEART/NSTA Trust advanced significantly, creating a coordinated pipeline of vocational and entrepreneurial training programmes that will be implemented in quarter two. These include courses such as Customer Service Admin Assistant, Guest Room Attendant, Hair Braiding and Weaving, Bartending, Events Management and Turf Management, planned across Parade Gardens, Rose Gardens, May Pen West, Salt Spring and Savanna-la-Mar. Registration processes, modalities and mobilisation strategies have been finalised, with an estimated 180 residents expected to participate. This represents one of the largest coordinated vocational rollouts to date under STAR.

Employment outcomes showed continued progress, with 65 residents securing formal work during the quarter, equalling 62 percent of the quarterly target and bringing cumulative placements to 401 since the start of the programme. Two job fairs were held for residents from Salt Spring, Parade Gardens and Rose Gardens, attracting 89 attendees and drawing participation from fifteen employers across manufacturing, hospitality, services and financial sectors. Retention trends varied by community, and the overall one-year retention rate stood at 59 percent. Challenges persisted among residents who exited roles early due to concerns about shift hours, minimum wage rates, transportation issues and job fit. Some residents remained hesitant to attend interviews or accept available roles. To address these gaps, STAR expanded its Employment Team this quarter and continued targeted coaching and employer outreach. Planning also began for the introduction of an Internship Programme to bridge readiness and workplace expectations.

Entrepreneurship support advanced significantly through the Nano Grant Programme. In partnership with the Ministry of National Security, four cohorts were delivered across Salt Spring, Savanna-la-Mar and Parade Gardens. One hundred applicants were screened and fifty-seven completed the two-day training. Improvements in understanding the Business Model Canvas and core money management principles were recorded across all locations, with gains ranging from 26 to 50 percent between pre- and post-tests. These results indicate stronger preparedness for microenterprise development.

In May Pen West, STAR continued efforts to support cottage industry businesses following a Year 3 needs assessment. Twenty entrepreneurs completed the adapted Nano Grant workshop, and their post-test scores showed a 52 percent improvement. A follow-up marketing workshop for fourteen participants strengthened skills in customer engagement, product promotion and communication. All participants qualified for JMD 50,000 in grant support to strengthen their businesses.

Support for farmers also progressed. Twenty farmers from the Treadlight district attended an administrative session to complete their Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) Farmer Identification Card applications, and sixteen submissions were successfully made. These cards are essential for accessing agricultural benefits and ensuring compliance when transporting produce.

Financial inclusion efforts continued throughout the quarter. Five engagements were held, including dedicated sessions and activities integrated into Nano Grant workshops. A session in May Pen West engaged thirty-five residents, while financial institutions participated in the Salt Spring Job Fair to support account opening and introduce products. However, strict Know Your Customer requirements limited the number of accounts successfully opened. Only three new accounts were confirmed. Discussions with banking partners will continue to explore more accessible onboarding options for residents



with limited documentation. **Overall, quarter one demonstrated strong engagement in training and entrepreneurship, with particularly encouraging results in Salt Spring and Rose Gardens. These experiences also highlighted the need** for deeper psychosocial support, enhanced preparatory training for employer pathways and renewed mobilisation strategies as STAR continues to work with residents who require more targeted encouragement and readiness support. Lessons from this quarter will shape the expansion of training, employer partnerships and economic inclusion efforts in quarter two.



THEMATIC AREA 3 COMMUNITY-LED ACTION

Community-led action remains a central pillar of Project STAR, ensuring that residents, community groups, and local institutions continue to shape and sustain change within their communities. STAR worked with Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), strengthened Community Transformation Boards (CTBs) and Community Intervention Teams (CITs), and supported a range of local events aimed at building cohesion, leadership, and ownership. These efforts are essential to embedding resilience, fostering accountability, and maintaining community engagement beyond STAR’s operational presence.

Work with CBOs continued across all five communities. In Rose Gardens, the Parenting Club hosted a session titled “Who Am I? Investing in Me the Parent,” which focused on self-care and the link between caregiver wellbeing and positive parenting. Eight members participated in an action-planning meeting to map activities for the next six months. While members expressed greater interest in social and fundraising activities than skill-building sessions, plans were made for a parenting workshop with the National Parenting Support Commission in September. In May Pen West, the Havannah Heights Parenting Club engaged the Social Development Commission to finalise membership forms and prepare for registration. In Parade Gardens, the parenting club was paused during the reporting period, with a relaunch planned for October. Support to families continued in the form of book vouchers and emergency assistance for vulnerable parents.

Senior citizens’ groups remained active and well-attended. The Visionary Senior Citizens Club in Salt Spring held regular meetings and social activities, with members expressing strong appreciation for the sense of value and belonging the group provides. In Rose Gardens, senior club attendance increased significantly from 13 to 26 participants. Meetings focused on the delivery of birth certificates and discussions around senior ID cards, while the group explored options for feasible activities that would be engaging for both men and women.

Community governance structures also remained active. CTB meetings were held in Rose Gardens, Salt Spring and May Pen West. These sessions provided space to review progress on Community Transformation Action Plans, introduce new staff and address programme challenges. In Rose Gardens, issues such as inconsistent attendance in the Kicking Forward programme, limited resources for participants and reduced turnout in the Parenting Club during the election season were discussed. In Salt Spring, the CTB reviewed CTAP progress, distributed birth certificates and identified agencies to be included in future community hubs, including RADA, TAJ, NIS and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

CIT meetings were convened in Rose Gardens, Parade Gardens, Savanna-la-Mar and Salt Spring. These meetings coordinated planning for major events and strengthened collaboration among community partners. In Rose Gardens, a meeting was also held with the Community Development Committee (CDC) to discuss revitalising the group following reduced activity. In Salt Spring, years of advocacy by the CDC culminated in a significant milestone with the dedication of the SPRING Resource Centre. Formerly an abandoned basic school, the facility has now been renovated to 85 percent completion and will serve as a much-needed space for community meetings, training and youth activities. Minor repairs are still pending, but the centre represents a major achievement for community leadership and self-organisation.

**Community events contributed significantly to social cohesion this quarter.** In Rose Gardens, the “Big Man Tings” Workshop, led by facilitators from the Violence Prevention Alliance, brought together 11 of the 18 mobilised participants to explore masculinity, social norms, power, boundaries and consent. Participants engaged openly and expressed how meaningful and relatable the sessions were. Requests were made to expand the programme to young men aged 16 to 22. Future sessions will include clearer mobilisation messaging and a recommended cohort age of 18 to 30.





THEMATIC AREA 3 COMMUNITY-LED ACTION

Youth clubs remained active with varying levels of engagement. The Police Youth Club (PYC) in Parade Gardens underwent a strategic review, resulting in an agreement with the Jamaica Constabulary Force to refocus its membership on youth aged 15 and older. The Gold Street PYC was reactivated through a well-attended social event that drew 36 young people. While turnout was strong, it became evident that future recruitment should prioritise youth already connected to STAR programmes to build more consistent engagement. Weekly meetings will resume in September. Plans are also underway to reactivate the Rose Gardens PYC following the same model.

**The Innercity Youth Task Force in Parade Gardens remained one of the most active youth groups,** offering creative sessions such as bead-making and paper craft, as well as leadership meetings and a back-to-school treat. Attendance consistently exceeded expectations, although the group continues to need support in fundraising and capacity-building. These activities will be aligned with the upcoming PYC relaunch to create a more integrated youth leadership model.

Youth sports continued to be a major entry point for engagement under the Kicking Forward programme. Participation varied across communities. Savanna-la-Mar recorded notable improvements in behaviour and basic skills among younger children, although attendance declined slightly before the programme paused for the local U-15 league. Salt Spring saw significant fluctuations but experienced a major surge in attendance following the donation of football boots and socks from the Clasil Nelson Foundation. Journals were also distributed to encourage goal setting and personal reflection. In Rose Gardens and Parade Gardens, turnout initially rose due to mobilisation efforts but later declined due to interpersonal conflict among participants. Personal development sessions delivered by the Jamaica Constabulary Force, Restorative Justice Programme and Talk Up Yout contributed to improved discipline and self-awareness. Parade Gardens concluded the quarter with improved attendance following a

motivational address from Corporal Cornwall, who shared his own experiences growing up in challenging circumstances.

In May Pen West, the programme began during the quarter and reached 53 participants, stabilising at around 40 near the end of August. Sessions were shifted to Saturday mornings based on feedback from parents, and an additional coach is expected in the next quarter. Although a pause was planned for August, the programme instead concluded the quarter with a mini-tournament at Breezy Castle, which generated strong turnout from both East Downtown Kingston communities. STAR also supported the annual “Supm Fi Talk Bout” sports extravaganza, which featured netball, football and a bike stunt show. Many boys from the Kicking Forward programme, particularly in Parade Gardens, participated in the activities.

Restorative Justice (RJ) work progressed through STAR’s partnership with the Ministry of Justice. A sensitisation session was held in Parade Gardens to identify community members interested in RJ Facilitator training. Eight residents, including four men and four women, attended and expressed willingness to participate in future training sessions. Although this was slightly below the target of ten participants, the interest shown by active community leaders and Justices of the Peace provides a strong foundation for expanding restorative practices within the community.

Technical partnerships continued to strengthen STAR’s community-led work. Activities with the Ministry of National Security included Nano Grant training sessions, while work with HEART/NSTA Trust focused on aligning vocational and entrepreneurial programmes with community priorities. Engagement with the Universal Service Fund and Jamaica Business Development Corporation progressed around access to ICT tools and business development support. Support from American Friends of Jamaica and the Violence Prevention Alliance provided targeted funding for youth nutrition and male role modelling programmes.



Overall, quarter one demonstrated sustained participation across governance structures, youth programmes and community-led initiatives. The dedication shown by local leaders, youth groups and senior citizens demonstrates the growing foundation for long-term community ownership. Lessons learned this quarter will support continued strengthening of governance bodies, deeper alignment with local priorities and expanded opportunities for residents to lead their own community development.



# Looking Forward

As Project STAR enters quarter two, we will focus on strengthening the systems, partnerships and community-led initiatives that advanced progress this quarter. The months ahead will prioritise expanding skills development and employment pathways, deepening psychosocial support, and reinforcing community leadership structures across all STAR communities.

Employment readiness and workforce development will benefit from improved training preparation, stronger employer partnerships and more structured follow-up support. Building on lessons from recent cohorts, STAR will place greater emphasis on communication skills, digital readiness and interview preparation to help residents secure and retain meaningful work. Job fairs, employer outreach and one-on-one coaching will continue to link residents directly with companies seeking talent.

Support for families and young people will also grow. STAR will deepen psychosocial services by strengthening multi-agency referral networks, broadening access to counselling and integrating trauma-informed approaches across youth, education and social protection activities. Police Youth Clubs and other youth groups will be strengthened to provide mentorship, positive engagement and leadership development, while ongoing

academic support will help students transition into the new school term with confidence. Community governance will remain a cornerstone of STAR's approach. Community Transformation Boards and Community Intervention Teams will guide the next phase of CTAP implementation, ensuring residents have a clear role in decision-making and planning. Support to CBOs will focus on leadership development, governance, planning and financial management, helping groups become more sustainable and better equipped to take on long-term community responsibilities.

Entrepreneurship and economic inclusion will continue to advance. STAR will expand business development training, Nano Grant workshops and financial literacy sessions to support micro and small businesses. Work with farmers, cottage industry entrepreneurs and emerging business operators will focus on improving access to markets, strengthening documentation compliance and increasing financial resilience.

STAR remains firmly committed to adaptive, community-centred development. With stronger systems, attentive partnerships and growing local leadership, Quarter 2 presents an important opportunity to deepen impact and continue building safer, more resilient and more empowered communities.







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