



FIRST PERSON Inner-City Student Earns Highest Score

Student achieves near-perfect score on national Grade Six Exam



Sixth-grade student Hamesh Creighton earned the highest national score among his peers on Jamaica's standardized test.

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More than half of sixth grade students in Jamaica fail to achieve "near mastery" on language and math tests, and about 30 percent of them are functionally illiterate. The scores among inner-city schools are even worse, and they lack resources to bolster student performance. Hamesh Creighton, a sixth grade student at an inner-city school in Kingston, has beaten the odds.

Hamesh's school, St. Peter Claver Primary, has benefited from a USAID educational project. The project helped low-performing schools get teachers that are better trained, educational technology that excites students, and nutrition programs that increase student concentration. In 2006, Hamesh aced the national Grade Six Exam and has been awarded the Marcus Garvey Scholarship that goes to the top male student from a public school in Jamaica.

The national exam, administered by the government, is taken by over 50,000 primary school students each year to determine their place in high school. Hamesh's scores were 99 percent in Math, 99 percent in language arts, 99 percent in social studies, 98 percent in science, and 92 percent in communication. Next year, he will attend Campion College, one of Jamaica's most prestigious traditional high schools.

"I really feel good to make history at St. Peter Claver and I am looking forward to doing well at Campion," says Hamesh. The shy 11-year-old whiz kid loves to explore and is a budding scientist. He has consistently been at the top of his class at St. Peter Claver and his teachers and school administrators could not be more proud.

"We are tremendously proud of him and thankful to USAID for the support, training, and resources that we have received. Now, the school can provide a more sound education for its students," said Acting Principal Karen Jackson-Reynolds.

USAID works with over 70 primary schools to increase literacy and numeracy levels among Jamaican students. The program has helped St. Peter Claver in Kingston improve at a remarkable rate, and the school will continue to receive support through USAID's education programs.