



United Way
Trinidad and Tobago

BUILDING BRIDGES FROM LEARNING TO SUCCESS PRIMARY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME



July 2019 – July 2023

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

2G	Two generation
BBP	UWTT Building Bridges from Learning to Success Impact Programme
BoD	Board of Directors
CBGs	Community Based Groups
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CI	Community Impact
CKFTO	Caribbean Kids and Families Therapy Organisation
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
FPs	Funding Partners
IPs	Implementing Partners
MiFi	mini wireless hotspot
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NTOC	National Time of Caring
OST	Out of School Time
PC	Programme Coordinator
PSG	Parent Support Group
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SEA	Secondary Entrance Assessment
SSNN	UWTT Support to the New Norm in Primary Schools Project
UWTT	The United Way of Trinidad and Tobago

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Building Bridges to Success in Primary Schools Programme

September 2019 to July 2023

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the Report is to highlight the achievements of the Programme from launch September 2019 to end of July 2023. The period therefore covers the time where children's education was significantly disrupted by the prolonged closure of in person schooling due to COVID-19 pandemic policy restrictions. There is much work to be done to address the learning loss among our children in vulnerable communities¹. While remote schooling allowed continuity of schooling during the lockdown, and despite the generosity of individuals and corporate sector in the form of devices and connectivity, lower income families struggle to sustain the effort needed for their children to keep up and now to catch up.

Globally, studies on learning loss in communities, which already suffer from high levels of learning poverty, calls for an acceleration and intensification of inputs for these children. Studies estimate that for countries where there were prolonged restrictions on in person schooling, the loss could be as high as 60 to 70 % of the duration of remote schooling. For Trinidad and Tobago which had remote schooling for 2 years for primary schools, this can range from a year to a year and a half of learning lost.

In this report, UWTT will show how we set out to preserve the integrity and resources of the Programme until school re-opened - as we recognised that the Programme would be needed more than ever on resuming in person school. In addition to adapting the Programme itself for the New Norm, more work was done to improve the capacity for programme monitoring as this will be needed to strengthen the case for resource mobilisation and advocacy. In addition, UWTT designed and implemented new initiatives under the umbrella of the Building Bridges Programme by aligning our COVID-19 response and recovery activity, from 2020 into 2022, to support the primary school communities of the Building Bridges Programme as we are committed to their recovery. These initiatives included the Support to the New Norm Project and the Family Cash Grants Programme.

1 Building Bridges Programme Overview

The multi-year UWTT Building Bridges to Success Impact Programme (BBP) was launched in 2019, with the special focus on entry level Infants 1 and 2 classes to ensure strong foundational skills and children reading to learn by age 8 or standard 2 as our target. The super goal of the Programme is to improve childhood success and resilience so that the likelihood of completing secondary school successfully is increased. It is clear that COVID-19 and resulting policies has amplified the inequity that already existed by community, gender and in our education and health sectors - there is increased need as well as opportunity to address these urgently and differently.

We have started to adapt the BB Programme 2021-2023 **to support blended schooling as part of the New Norm** – which keeps our target on supporting schools to re-open in person schooling. *Blended*

¹ Schools in Trinidad and Tobago were closed for in person school in March 2020. Secondary schools, with the emphasis on examination years, began to return in September 2021 linked to a vaccination drive mandating students but without mandate for teachers or adults. Primary school and pre-schools were reopened for in person schooling on April 2022.

learning is an approach that leverages both digital tools and face-to-face instruction and is built on the premise that students will be attending classes in school buildings. The Programme comprises a multi-component synergistic approach to reach the children by supporting parents, teachers, school leadership (see figure 1). This is a collective working advocacy through action Programme aligned to the Ministry of Education Guidelines for re-opening schools, September 2021.

The Components of the Building Bridges to Success Programme include the following objectives (refer Figure 1):

1. Support **parents** to better engage in learning process of blended schooling.
2. Provide **teachers** with support for language development and social emotional learning, small group learning and supervision during break time.
3. Provide support to school and community leadership to create a culture of shared responsibility.
4. Promote out of school time (OST) play opportunities (music and sport)
5. Strengthen capacity for the new norm and blended schooling: including public health safety protocols and connectivity capacity of school as connectivity hub for students and teachers.

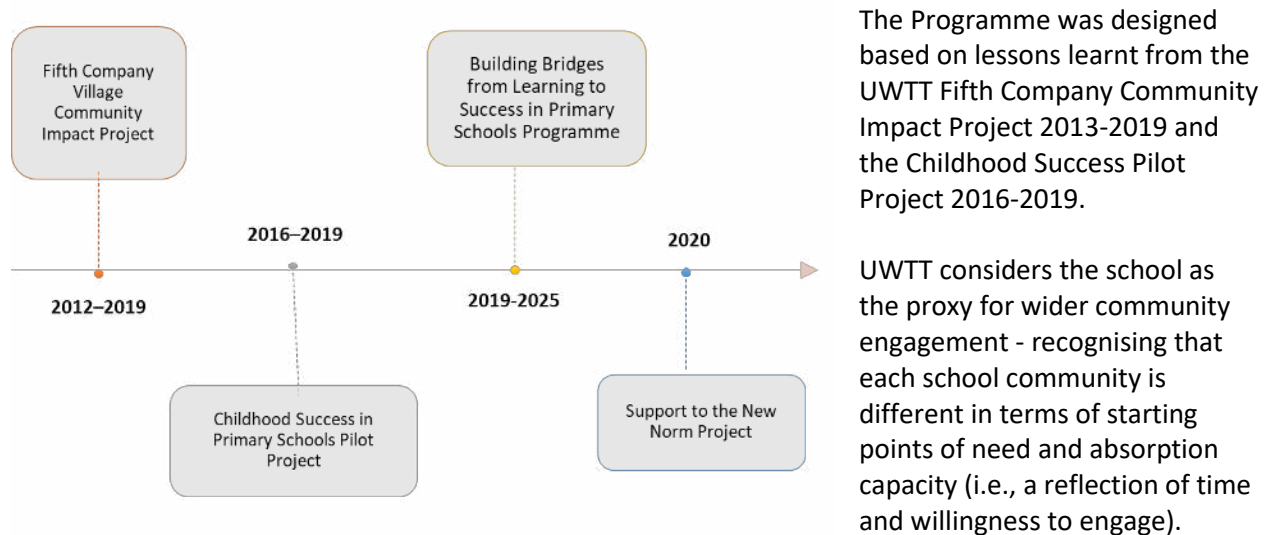


Figure 1: Genesis of Building Bridges Programme 2019-2025

The theory of change of the Programme illustrates the need for a balanced approach to achieve the desired outcomes and impact (see figure 2). The time frame for this achievement for low-income communities have increased because of the learning loss experienced. The opportunity here is to ensure that this learning loss does not extend into the children’s future for a protracted basis.

The design of the Programme will have impact through its work on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 (Good Health and Well being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent Work), and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Figure 2: Components of the UWTT Building Bridges Programme (updated March 2022)

Building Bridges 5 Components – a systems approach to balance activities in key areas Adapted to support Blended Learning

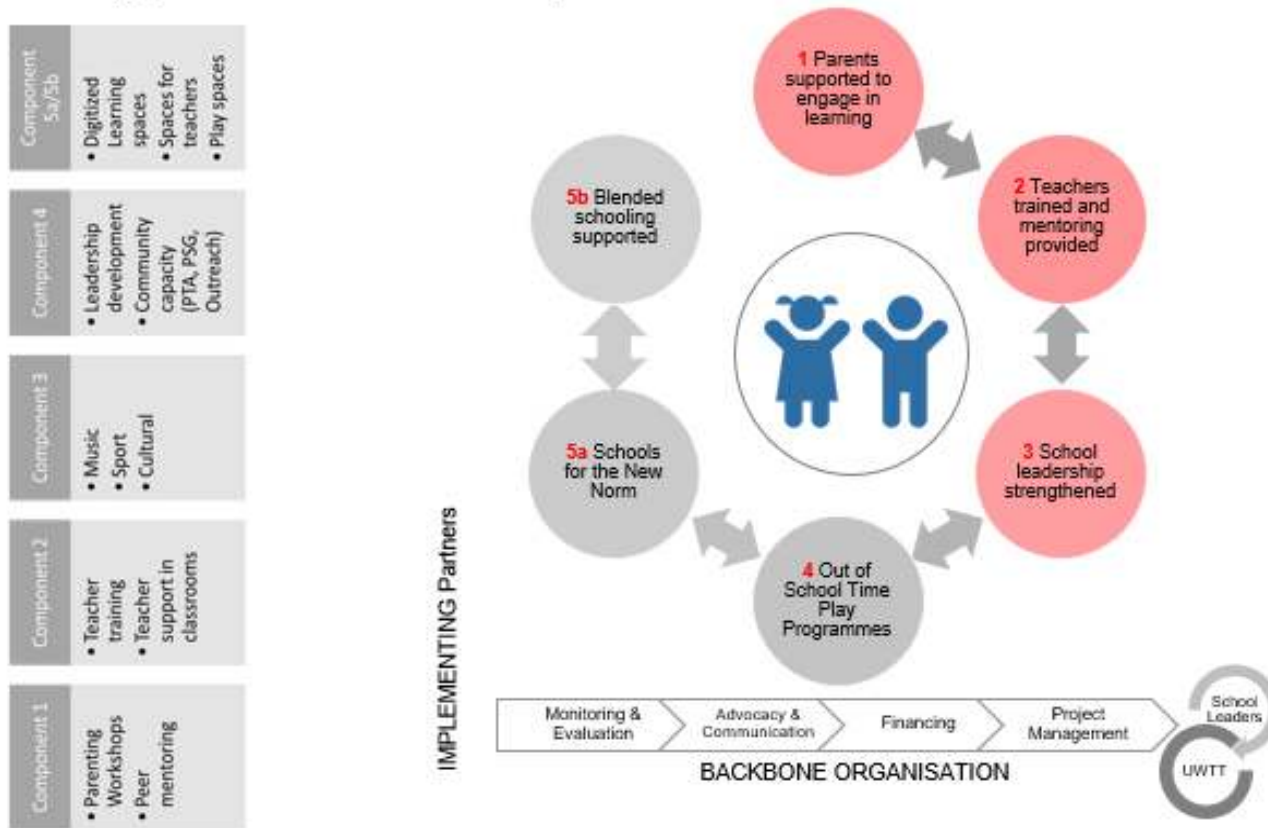
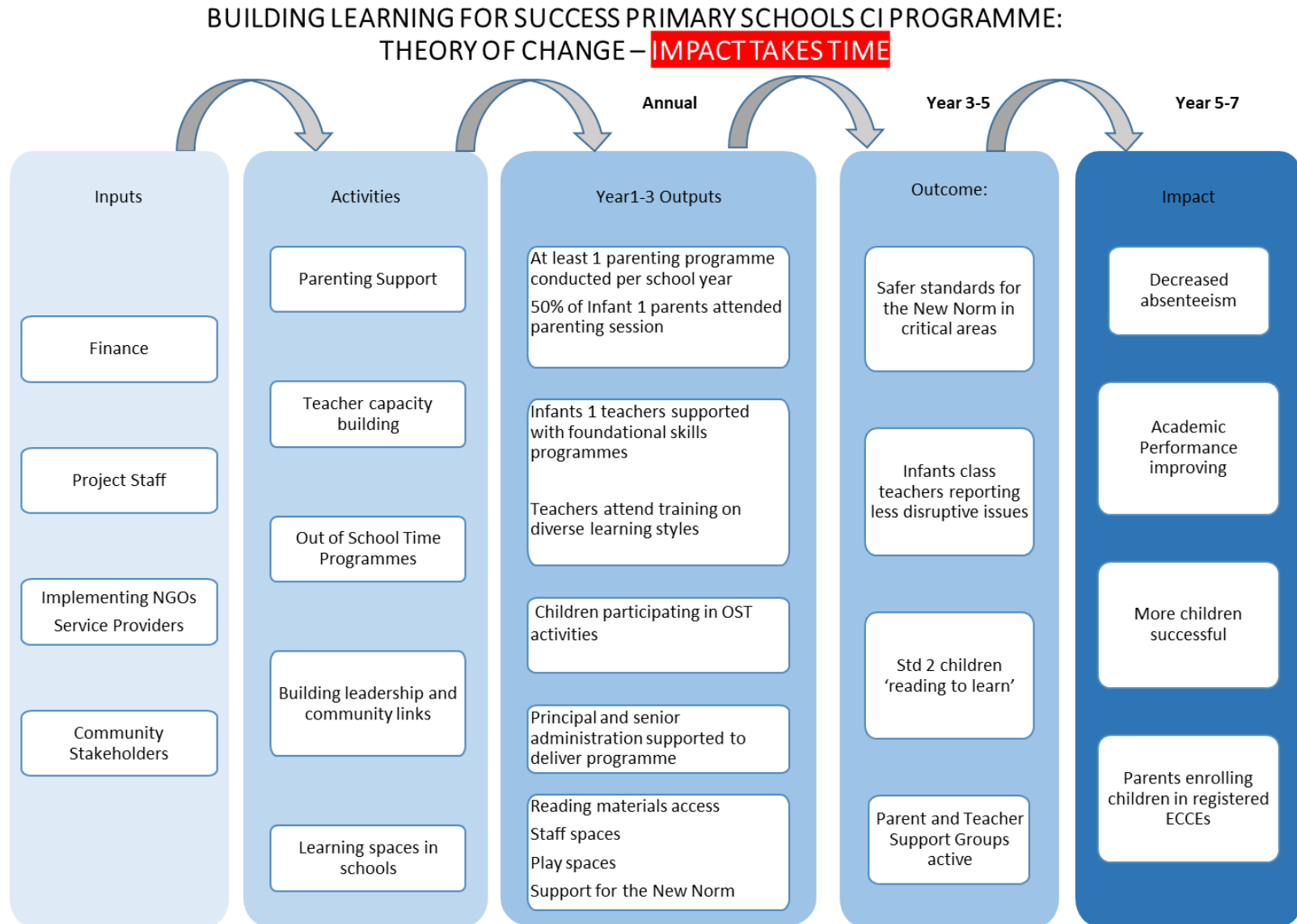


Figure 3: Theory of Change of UWTT Building Bridges Programme



2 List of Building Bridges Programme School Partners 2022-23

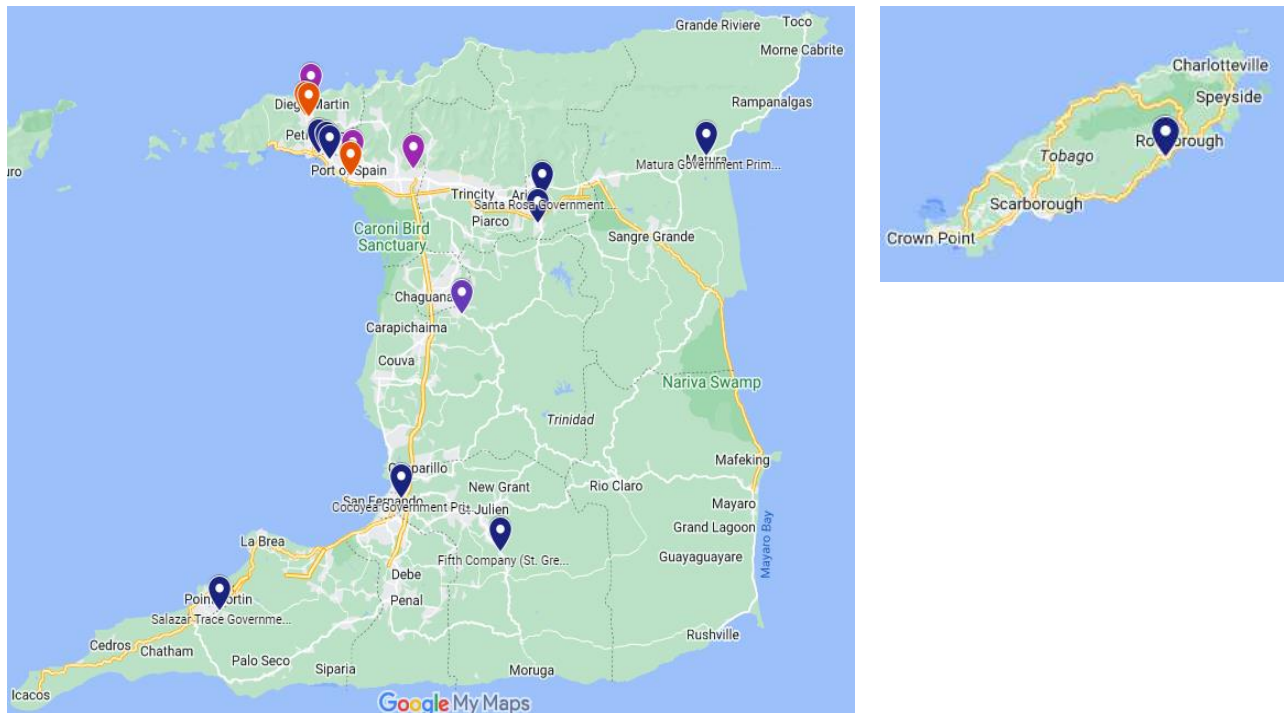
Over the reporting period, the number of schools participating in the Programme increased from 10 to 15, mainly through the Support to the New Norm Project and the Think Equal Social and Emotional Learning Project launched in 2020 and 2022 respectively. In 2022, 4 schools were graduated from the Programme making room for 4 new schools. It is to be noted that as part of the exit strategy for Fifth Company Village Community Impact Project, St Gregory's Fifth Company Anglican Primary School is included as a Building Bridges Programme school community partner.

	SCHOOL NAME	STUDENT POP.
1	Belle Garden Anglican Primary School (Tobago)	225
2	Cocorite Government Primary School	165
3	Cocoyea Government Primary School	169
4	LaHorquetta South Government Primary School	671
5	Matura Government Primary School	275
6	Nelson Street Boys Roman Catholic Primary School	340
7	Salazar Trace Government Primary School (rural)	188
8	Santa Rosa Government Primary School	450
9	St. Mary's Mucurapo Boys RC Primary School	270
10	St. Mary's Mucurapo Girls RC Primary School	512
11	Fifth Company (St. Gregory's) Anglican Primary School (rural)	164
12	<i>Belmont Boys RC Primary School</i>	275
13	<i>Mt. D'Or Government Primary School</i>	140
14	<i>Palmiste Govt Primary School</i>	200
15	<i>Patna River Estate Government Primary School</i>	305
	SUBTOTAL POPULATION	4,349
GRADUATED/ROTATED - September 2022		
1	Diamond Vale Government Primary School	516
2	Diego Martin Boys Roman Catholic Primary School	444
3	Nelson Street Girls Roman Catholic Primary School	362
4	Marabella Anglican Boys Primary School	100
	SUBTOTAL POPULATION	1,422
	TOTAL POPULATION	5,892

As a transition year, in 2022, the Programme benefitted nearly 6,000 children and their families in the wider community.

The aim was to increase the number of schools participating in the Programme to improve geographical reach as well as economy of scale while ensuring that enough resources are available to achieve the desired outcomes.

Figure 4: Map showing location of Schools and List of Schools included in Project.



*orange dots are new schools and purple dots are schools that will be graduated from the programme in 2022.

3 Progress by Component

3.1 Component 1: Parenting Support

Families in Action (FIA) was contracted in December 2019 to implement their Confident Parenting Programme with a focus on the parents of infants 1 and 2 children. The approach was to conduct 6 session workshops per school community on topics which built on and complemented each other with the overall purpose to improve understanding of parents on the development of children in this age group and share practical ways how parents can support their children’s learning. When schools closed on March 20, 2020, FIA and UWTT suspended the workshops as parents could not meet in person due to COVID-19 restrictions.

However, as schools continued to remain closed for in person schooling, UWTT approached FIA on resume sessions virtually, adapting the content to topics such as remote schooling support and other topics that may be useful to these parents who were experiencing significant hardships due to the economic effects of the continued lockdown. FIA re-engaged with schools in September 2020, by continuing to provide parenting support virtually until January 2023, and in person sessions with two schools have restarted in January 2023. FIA provides UWTT with quarterly reports on progress and is currently working with UWTT on extracting key lessons learnt and how these can shape how parenting support can be improved in the period 2023-2025.

Key challenges, consistently highlighted, include:

- Low attendance,
- Inconsistent attendance as measured by number of sessions/workshops attended by a parent,
- How to assess the outcome of the intervention related to low and inconsistent attendance,
- Introducing ways to incentivise attendance in an affordable and appropriate manner so as not to distort.

Attendance at parenting workshops were always noted as a challenge in many different projects that UWTT has invested over the years. Whereas it is easy to assume that lack of willingness is the sole reason for poor attendance, there is also an interplay of several factors for low-income communities which are:

- Nature of work where many parents have shift work or cannot ask for time off.
- Lack of awareness of benefits of greater knowledge
- Poor experience with previous parenting workshops

There remains no doubt that involving parents in conversations and meeting them where they are is part of the solution. Certainly, if student absenteeism is a step to achieving greater success, the only real recourse is to keep on trying to find ways to address.

In 2020, as part of our **Covid Response and Recovery Programme (CRRP)**, UWTT launched the Family Cash Transfer Project our by mobilising the People in Crisis Funds managed by Families in Action (FIA) and National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD). The aim was to provide support to families who had lost work due to the COVID-19 crisis in the various communities supported by UWTT and Partner Agencies. Through specific resource mobilisation efforts including support from United Way Worldwide², financial and human resources support were mobilised under the UWTT Family Wellbeing Priority Area. No UWTT project management charges were levied against the funds mobilised. Families in Action helped UWTT in the disbursement of cash grants to those parents who had bank accounts - during the lockdown this was about 10% of the beneficiary pool as bank accounts were frozen if inactive for more than 6 months.

Efforts were made to encourage attendance at parenting sessions by awarding cash grants, in that parents who reported not being able to afford cell phone top ups to attend sessions as a reason for not attending consistently were recommended by FIA for a grant. Then, cash grants had to be given in advance and with trust – however this did not appear to lead to consistent attendance. Most families reported using the card for food, internet and medicines.

Please see feedback from families on **Video: [UWTT - Family Cash Transfer Programme 2020 \(Long version\) - YouTube](#)**

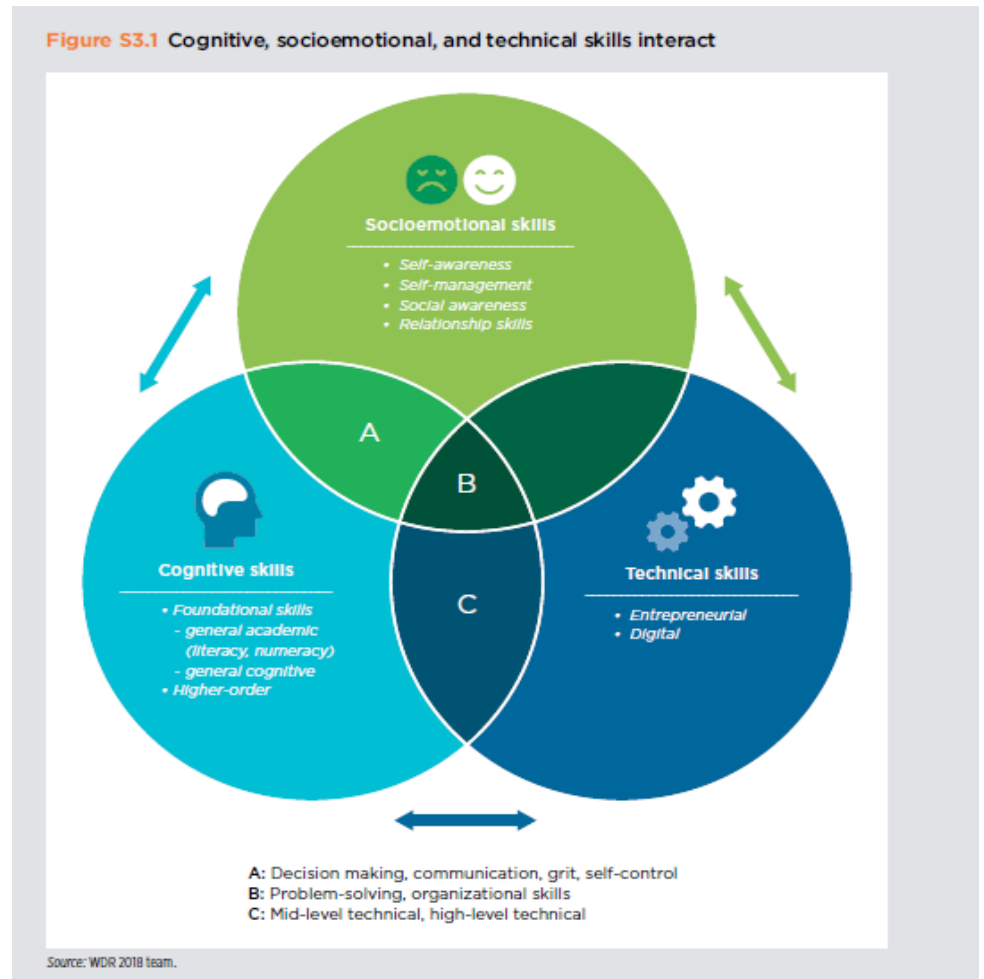
² UWW mobilised resources for the Latin America and Caribbean Countries from 3M Foundation and Citi Foundation in 2020-21

3.2 Component 2: Teacher Support

The BB Programme aims to support teachers to improve their capacity for building foundational cognitive skills with language development as the critical stepping stone to literacy and numeracy, and social and emotional learning (SEL) to complement the Ministry of Education curriculum. Refer Figure which illustrates how SEL is so critical to building competencies to ensure success: self-control, problem solving and importantly the ability to communicate.

The BB Programme provides teacher training, mentoring support in classrooms, classroom assistant trainees and as requested materials that are often not catered for in school budgets.

Figure 5: Foundational skills for Younger learners



This Component comprises the following activities:

A. Training Teachers for in class work

A.1. Language Development using the NOW! Programme (supported by Morris Centre)

- The NOW! Programme is geared to improving phonemic awareness as a precursor/adjunct to the use of the Jolly Phonics Programme in Primary schools.
- 34 teachers and principals trained in July 2019 for the September 2019-20 school year.
- 22 teachers and principals trained in July 2022 for September 2022-23 school year.

A.2. Social and Emotional Learning using Think Equal Programme (local support to be determined)

- Think Equal is a SEL Programme (www.thinkequal.org) focused on under 7-year-old children. UWTT had supported the Early Childhood and Care Education (ECCE) Division of Ministry of Education (MoE) in their 2019 pilot project for rollout in 2019-2020
- Given the lock down of in person school since March 2020, the incoming infants 1 and 2 students will require increased input for SEL as they would have suffered not only learning

loss as it relates to language development, but also suffered from the sense of heightened anxiety and stress in their home.

- We can also assume that by teachers going through the training, this may also help them reflect on their own needs and see how they can incorporate into some level of self care.
- 34 teachers and principals completed the online orientation training in July to August 2022 for school year September 2022-23.

B. Mentoring Support

- B.1. Lessons learnt from our pilot project³ and working with NGO partners involved with teacher training are that training requires both monitoring for iterative improvements, particularly with new approaches or a new tool, as well as needs to be supported in the classroom for the teacher to feel confident in using the tool/skills.
- B.2. Mentoring needs to be regular and could take the form of encouragement, clarification on techniques, observation, conducting part or whole of the session at times.
- B.3. UWTT, Morris Centre, FIA, Let's Read and TE are providing mentoring support for the NOW! Programme and for the Think Equal SEL Programme which can take the form of observation, co teaching, and at times conducting the lesson if teacher is absent.
- For the NOW! Programme, 17 teachers were mentored in 2019 to March 2020 and 17 teachers were mentored for academic year 2022-23, receiving 956 in-class mentorship sessions.
 - For the Think Equal SEL, UWTT has been liaising directly with schools and teachers to determine pace of implementation of the programme in the classrooms and working with Think Equal Global support on scoping the type of support that teachers need based on our monitoring observations. Let's Read, Morris Centre and FIA have been also advising as opportunities present during their visits. A detailed report was shared with TE in January 2023⁴ and meeting held to discuss ways forward. 26 classrooms benefitted from the Think Equal – Social and Emotional Skills programme implementation.

C. Classroom Assistants Trainee Support

Globally, data shows that both teachers and students will require additional support when they return to in person school.⁵ However, in practice no amount of training plus mentoring of teachers can address the level of need among students in COVID-19 recovery stages in the communities UWTT serves, without some more hands on deck. Teacher's report 'burn out' and higher levels of anxiety about the constant demands of remote schooling and now how they will manage with being back in person school. We must look at ways to complement and supplement the efforts made by teachers as they too adapt to blended schooling.

³ [Childhood Success Project Report](#)

⁴ [Think Equal Report, January 2023](#)

⁵ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/08/24/teacher-assistants-are-needed-now-more-than-ever/>

The Classroom Assistant Trainee Pilot Project was launched in July 2022 for schools who indicated the willingness and capacity to have the Trainees in the classrooms. The aim of the Pilot Project is to provide in classroom support to the infants 1 and 2 classes through Classroom Assistant (CA) Trainees. The role of the CA Trainee is to support the teacher in classroom organisation and introduction of play/outside breaks into the school day, supervision of those breaks, adjusting to new rules of the new norm such as wearing masks, washing hands, distancing protocols. This will be in addition to the Substitute Teacher Programme announced by the Ministry of Education and the On-the-Job Trainees (OJTs) assigned to the school.

The Building Bridges Programme aims to recruit newly graduating Form 5 students (age 17-19) and develop and deliver a modular training programme for the Classroom Assistant Trainees. The Principals and schools have experience in including OJTs within their workforce, however OJTs are not usually assigned to classes for this purpose. It is known that levels of unemployment are high among this age group who would have generally been looking for jobs in retail and hospitality sectors which will take some time to recover. The hope is that they will welcome this opportunity for decent work and training in a safe environment. Candidates for the Programme will be carefully selected for their interest and suitability for working with very young children, local to the community to improve their affinity to the school community and reduce their travel time and willingness to learn. They will have to be fully vaccinated to be trained and if successful to be taken on as a school assistant.

This role is not meant to replace the role of the Teacher, as the trainees are not teacher trainees in any way or recruited because they want to be teachers. The basis of the training will be geared to elements of self-development, safeguarding children, understanding very young child development, practical skills of play and movement and how to help children to adapt and understand the new norm, rather than academic teaching of literacy and numeracy. Play and movement are essential to the management of the day where many of our children have not had the opportunity to learn how to socialize with their peers. Outdoor play has also been restricted in the last months, and our children do not need to come to school to be limited to classrooms.

UWTT feels that this type of support will be essential to the successful return to in person school, both to safeguard the children and to address the fears of parents, teachers, and the general public that we can be safe in schools. The 6 Schools who have partnered with the Pilot report a high level of satisfaction with the role the Trainees have played to date.

Key achievements/lessons from the Classroom Assistant Trainee Pilot Project⁶ at the end of Academic Year 2022-2023:

- Candidates were screened from references from secondary schools in the communities, the BB school Partners, collaborating NGOs⁷
 - 38 persons were shortlisted.

⁶ [Classroom Assistant Trainee Pilot Project Concept Note](#)

⁷ [Classroom Assistant Trainee Recruitment Report](#)

- 13 persons interviewed and 8 candidates recruited for the school year September 2022-23
- 8 schools (St Gregory's Fifth Company Anglican, Matura Government, Salazar Trace Government, Nelson Street Boys RC, La Horquetta South Government, Cocoyea Government - with 2 trainees assigned to 2 latter schools)
- Principals and Teachers reporting a high level of satisfaction with the support from the CA Trainees, the motivation and attitude of the Trainees to their work.
- Trainees express a high level of appreciation for the opportunity provided by the Project however some feel they have been affected by the high levels of absenteeism and disruption particularly in Term 1 September. (It was noted by all principals that the social and emotional skills of the incoming infants 1 were low)⁸
 - 6 trainees accepted the offer to return for the Academic Year 2023-2024.

3.3 Component 3 School and Community Leadership Support

The Building Bridges Programme is implemented under principal's discretion and written consent to be a partner. Principals and senior teachers are stewards of the school and provide the interface for stakeholders like UWTT with both the school community and the Ministry of Education. We have begun to streamline the arrangements whereas, schools should be actively interested and participating in Components 1, 2 and 3. Prior to 2020, schools usually started their engagement under Component 5, through relatively small beautification projects implemented by corporate partners under auspices of the National Day of Caring Event. However, the heart of the Building Bridges Programme are the inputs provided through programmes not infrastructure, which should fall under the purview of the respective owners of the facilities.

The capacity and willingness of the Principal to engage with the purpose of the Building Bridges Programme is critical to achieving the outcomes and longer-term impact we seek from implementing the Programme with the school. The systems thinking approach used in the design of the Programme is based on the global data that a balanced and integrated range of activities is required for long lasting change, recognising that the results will take time. The long-term vision of the Building Bridges Investment in the incoming Infants is to improve likelihood of graduating from secondary school, as it is interventions in this age group that has been shown to be most cost effective. It is not either easy nor simple messaging, as fast results and siloed thinking are often the way we implement projects.

The mainstay activity of the component is regular meetings of the Principals aimed at creating a network of primary school leaders who can share their capacity with each other as well as lessons learned from working with the Building Bridges Programme. The joint meetings are supported by routine individual meetings (via MS Teams and WhatsApp during COVID shut down) and school visits.

It is through this interface that UWTT improves our understanding of the school community needs, strengths as well as ensure that the BB Programme implemented in this school community is appropriate and relevant to this community.

⁸ [Classroom Assistant Trainee Feedback Session, March 2023](#)

UWTT supports the School to enroll in the Foundation for the Enhancement and Enrichment of Life (FEEL) Clubs. Through this partnership, the school is eligible to receive distributions for school supplies as well as food supplies to be shared with the families in the school. While principals welcome the inputs, there are challenges with organising transportation and for the community distribution of food, decanting the goods into smaller packages. UWTT has continued to work with FEEL on achieving a longer notice time for distributions, more relevant content for communities to improve the uptake.

Together with the Family Cash Grants, the FEEL Club food distributions provides the Principal ways to interface with parents and families and in some schools, we are beginning to see the involvement of Parent Support Groups or PTAs as a step forward in community building.

Key achievements/lessons include:

- 24 regular group meetings held with Principals.
- More than 50 meetings/visits to individual schools (at least once a term)
- 14 schools registered with FEEL clubs every year.
- 7 Principals attending self care workshop with FIA.
- Principals able to accept stakeholder's support for supplies easily as they are not receiving same as they did before or being allocated reasonable operating budgets from the Ministry.
- Principals also accept stakeholder's support to implement programmes, however it is dependent on their relationship with the school supervisor and the classroom teacher for smooth implementation.

3.4 Component 4: Out of School Time (OST) Play

Participation in high-quality Out-of-School Time (OST) programmes helps to improve student work-study habits, homework completion rates, and school grades. Of equal importance for marginalised and at risk youth, these programmes also help to increase student engagement and school connectedness, build self-esteem, improve relationships with peers and adults, and decline in negative, risk-taking behaviour. In turn, increased student engagement and performance in school can help to improve overall educational attainment. It has been shown that increasing access to engaging, relevant, and high-quality out-of-school time activities, especially for at-risk students, will ultimately help to decrease absenteeism and increase graduation rates.

There has been much documented about the effects of COVID-19 restrictions on the emotional and social wellbeing of children. Investment in more OST Play activity for children in school is a key intervention for emotional healing, social skills building and well as increasing physical activity.

This component is often the most difficult to implement and sustain inclusive of all children, regardless of ability, because of the relatively high cost of tutoring. Schools will tend to prioritise competition and/or programmes that parents will be charged fees for participation. Many families in low-income communities will prioritize 'academic lessons' over sport or music to make ends meet.

For this Component, UWTT has prioritised the OST Music Programme aimed to be inclusive of younger students. It is envisaged that the expanded learning opportunities offered in the OST Programme will support developmentally appropriate cognitive, physical, social, and emotional outcomes in the children.

Music lessons are typically offered to children whose families have the resources to access them, whilst those in underserved and poorer communities are not provided that opportunity. Even for primary public schools which have been provided a pan tutor, they do not teach the infants 1 and 2 classes. The benefits of teaching music to children and effects of music on the brain are proven to foster creativity and improve development. Young children who learn, study and practice music also improve many other skills such as reading, writing, and conveying their thoughts more clearly. The Project will bridge that gap by the introduction of a music literacy programme around the steelpan and other instruments such as djembe drums.

The steelpan is unique, the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago, as the only acoustic musical instrument invented in the 20th century capable of being played in orchestral formation. Since independence, pan has helped shape a sense of national consciousness, while also perpetuating feelings of solidarity in many grass-roots communities. Pan is viewed as an indigenous creation that transcends ethnic heritages and helps draw the nation's diverse groups together and express a sense of a common identity. Tuition is easily accomplished by rote learning, making it easily adaptable to all ages particularly to those children with special needs.

We are also fortunate that for the new normal of living with COVID 19, pan and drums are considered low risk musical instruments as percussion instruments. Classes can be safely held while reinforcing policies of controlling group size, using outdoor spaces, physical distancing, practising hand hygiene and sanitising shared instruments. Sticks are inexpensive enough that each child can be given their own. Refer Figure 6 for Guidelines from a Harvard School of Public Health on how music and theatre classes can be reimagined in the New Norm⁹.

⁹ [Keeping Schools Open Needs to be Prioritized - Schools For Health](#)

Figure 6: The importance of Music and tips for the New Norm

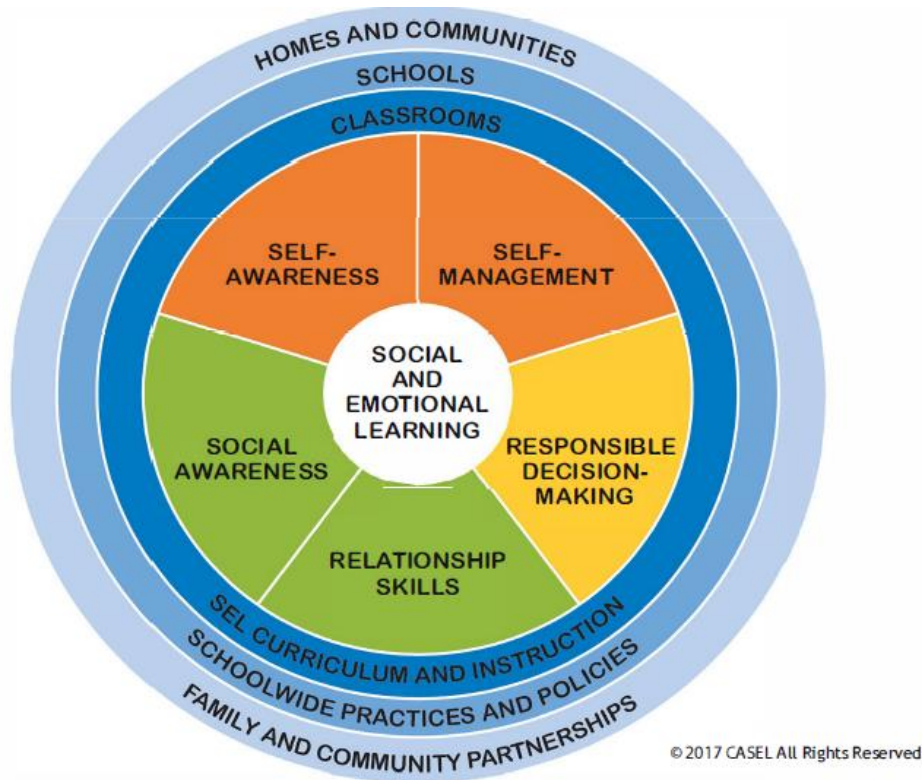
Reimagine music and theater classes

- Replace higher-risk music and theater activities with safer alternatives
- Move outdoors
- Increase space between performers

Music education is associated with numerous benefits, including higher academic scores, better memory recall, and the development of areas of the brain related to language and reasoning. Music and theater education should continue, but there are ways they can be made safer. Instruments that do not involve blowing air from the mouth, such as percussion or strings instruments, could be used instead of higher-risk woodwind instruments, which have the potential for spread of aerosols and droplets. Singing and voice projection are also higher-risk activities that carry a risk of viral transmission through aerosols and droplets. In-class instruction in these higher-risk activities can be replaced with outdoor practice (weather permitting), music theory, theater history, or vocal anatomy lessons. Another option is to continue online instruction for certain instruments, choirs, or ensembles, or practice outdoors in smaller, well-spaced groups. Additionally, all equipment, even student's personal instruments, should be cleaned routinely. Smaller music spaces such as individual practice rooms may be difficult to properly ventilate, so there should be time set aside to keep the door open and clean the room in between uses, or the rooms can be temporarily closed. In theater classes, it may be preferable to focus on rehearsing monologues, remote performances, more performances with small casts that do not require close interaction or performances that can be rehearsed outdoors.

Learning to play the pan together as a band, with children playing the different pans that make up the steel orchestra, helps them to understand the importance of team work because the teacher will give the music to a section leader who has the responsibility of teaching all the other players in his/her section. It teaches the student the importance of cooperative learning, that there is no 'I' in the band, it is always 'we'. This helps the children develop how important it is to be models firstly in their section and then in their community. In this way, playing in a band supports social and emotional learning skill sets shown in Figure 7, particularly those of self-awareness, self-management, and relationship skills.

Figure 7: Social and Emotional Skills (www.Casel.org)



The primary aim of the music programme is to promote music as an outlet and an opportunity for the children of the school to connect, while leveraging the benefit that accrues to the education and development of the whole child particularly in communities where this avenue is out of reach of most families. UWTT had supported the pilot OST music programme with the Music Literacy Trust¹⁰ (MLT) for the children at St Gregory’s Fifth Company AC Primary School Moruga.¹¹ The programme was structured to include instrument practice, literacy, motivational talks, and visits by well-known musicians. The Programme has shown to improve cognitive, emotional, and academic achievement. Furthermore, to ensure sustainability, the Programme encourages the creation of a cadre of musicians within the school community to support the band after the project ends.

We know that when the children return to school in September that there will be an increased need for social and emotional support, since many of them have been at homes where anxiety levels are high given the precarious times. Social and Emotional Learning techniques (SEL) are already built into the MLT Programme and will be even more appropriate than ever.

Key lessons learnt/achievements

Although primary schools reopened for in person school in April 2022, attendance was neither full nor consistent, so work on the OST Music Programme at Mucurapo Boys RC Primary School was deferred to September 2022 at the request of the school. However, Term 1 of the academic year 2022-2023

¹⁰ Music Literacy Trust Video 10-year Anniversary Oct 2014: <https://youtu.be/CBs76kMQbH4>

¹¹ St Gregory’s Primary School Preliminary Judging 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x71vWijb9U8>

remained quite disrupted due in part to remaining COVID-19 quarantine and isolation rules and in part due to the residual fear and mistrust of information around what it means to adjust to the New Norm.

UWTT, with the funds available, completed the procurement exercise for a pan ensemble from three different suppliers. Quotations were evaluated based on quality, delivery time, cost and if any follow up support would be available. Musical Instruments of Trinidad and Tobago Company Limited (MITTCO) was selected based as they scored highest against the criteria assessed.¹² The instruments were delivered in March 2023.

In line with UWTT's focus on the infants' classes, a tutor experienced with teaching the age group of under 7-year-olds started in March music sessions with one of the Infant classes, twice a week. The school and the class were selected as it is also implementing other programmes supported by UWTT, including the Neurodevelopment of Words (NOW!) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) implemented with Morris Centre and Think Equal respectively.

Work in Term 3 will continued supporting the school to recruit community members to start a pan tutoring programme in the school. Standard 5 children who have finished their Secondary School Entrance Examination (SEA) would benefit from being involved. A 2 week camp was successfully planned and implemented as a way to kick start the steelpan programme for the next school year. It is hoped that the Ministry of Education will be restarting the Pan in Schools Programme and will assign a pan tutor to the school since pans have been made available. The Catholic Education Management Board has also started a pan tutor initiative for 6 East Port of Spain schools, and this can also be explored.

- 20 sessions were provided to 20 students (infants 1) of St. Mary's Mucurapo Boys RC Primary School in Term 2 and 3 of the 2022-2023 Academic Year.
- St. Mary's Mucurapo Steel Angels Orchestra Camp was hosted between July 10 – 21st benefitting 38 students and implementing 30 sessions.¹³
- UWTT received Tranche 2 grant funding from Scotiabank Foundation for the OST – Steel Pan procurement for Matura Government Primary School.

3.5 Supporting Blended Schooling and capacity for the New Norm

As a direct result of school closures for in person schooling, the objective of this component was adapted from the original purpose of supporting relatively small projects related to the priority areas of the Building Bridges Programme e.g., libraries, staff rooms, reading spaces.

In July 2020, UWTT launched the **Support to the New Norm (SSNN) in Primary Schools Project** (as our collective advocacy through action National Time of Caring (NTOC) Project) with the goal to support schools in the BB Programme to re-open as efficiently and safely as possible and minimize barriers for

¹² Ensemble comprises of 5 Tenor pans, 2 double seconds, 1 double guitar, 1 triple cello, 2 x 6-piece bass pans.

¹³ [-MLT St. Mary's Camp Report July 2023.pdf](#)

children to return to in person school. This is in recognition that many families will still be in economic recovery for some time to come.

The SSNN Project aimed to improve capacity for washing hands, wearing masks, distancing, ventilation, and school connectivity as the fundamentals to operating safely in the new norm. Phase 1 ran from July 2020 to June 2021 and Phase 2 is running July 2021 to March 2023. Refer to our website for a video and more information on the Project [the Support for the New Norm Project | United Way Trinidad and Tobago \(uwtt.com\)](https://www.uwtt.com)

UWTT is committed to implement the blended schooling model, with face-to-face school as the basis for the model, as the most effective way to reduce both physical and virtual absenteeism of those most at risk for learning loss. We feel that this is necessary to address learning loss in these communities and to ensure that this crisis does not increase the number of schools dropouts in the future. We used our resources to improve the resilience and capacity of these schools to manage living with the new norm.

While the investment is being targeted on the 15 primary schools in the UWTT Building Bridges Programme, we are hoping that we can help provide a model for other schools and partners to use. For example, UWTT collaborated with Habitat for Humanity by sharing the design for the handwashing troughs that they used in the schools they support.

The Project was started in August 2020 with mobilisation efforts to raise necessary funding to implement the Project. Of resources mobilised, 81% came from Corporate, 3% from individuals and in-kind donations and an additional 16% from the UWTT Community Fund and United Way Worldwide. Resources mobilised, financial and in kind, for the Support the New Norm Project Phase 1 and 2 totals \$2.18 m in addition to the Building Bridges Programme funding.

In preparation for the New Norm of COVID-19, the Project, working in 15 schools, has:

1. Improved handwashing capacity by installation of 40 permanent troughs stations for a total of about 80 faucets and provision of necessary consumables and accessories
2. Produced over 1,000 items of child and parent friendly communication materials to the schools with material available online.
3. Encourage universal mask wearing by distributing masks to the students and teachers with the distribution of over 18,000 high quality re-usable masks made in Trinidad and Tobago.
4. Improved ventilation capacity in schools with upgrading of 11 classroom spaces and installation of 57 wall mounted fans
5. Strengthened capacity for blended schooling through improving internet capacity in common spaces e.g., libraries, administration office in 2 schools.
6. An advocacy and visibility programme developed to support the Principals and other stakeholders to develop a culture of shared responsibility for living in the New Norm

During Phase 2, a series of projects were implemented aimed at improving ventilation in priority areas of the school and increasing capacity for blended schooling by improving school internet connectivity access. These projects included:

- Ventilation Project at St Mary's Mucurapo Boys RC School to reconfigure and open 6 classrooms¹⁴

¹⁴ [St Mary's Mucurapo Boys Project Report](#)

- Ventilation and Connectivity Projects at Cocoyea and Salazar Government¹⁵
- Blended Schooling Connectivity and Digital Library Space at Matura Government¹⁶
- Ventilation improved in infants classrooms in 10 schools through fan installation.

Evidence remains that younger children neither suffer severe COVID disease nor transmit the disease as first feared. UWTT continued to work to advocate for the safe return of the entry level classes and under 8-year old's as a key transition group who requires special consideration for their learning as well as their overall developmental needs. This is in line with the focus of the Building Bridges Programme. Investment made through the Support to the New Norm Project are those globally advocated for *building back better* for future scenarios such as we faced with COVID-19.

A wrap up video for Phase 1 of the Project was created as part of our Advocacy efforts.¹⁷ A second video was completed to highlight the importance of ventilation in schools as part of the New Norm.

As the schools opened in April 2022, COVID-19 restrictions regarding isolation and quarantine rules remained at strict levels until February 2023. As such, volunteering opportunities at previously implemented in 2013-2019 through the National Day of Caring were limited in scope as well as many corporate partners reported challenges in mobilising volunteers. UWTT was able to implement a small-scale Time of Caring at the end of 2022 which spurred feedback from partners on readiness and interest for 2023. These UWTT Time of Caring Projects included:

- Salazar Trace Government – Painting and planter beds in internal courtyard by Atlantic LNG¹⁸
- Matura Government – Painting of library and Standard 5 classrooms and wiring of same areas for connectivity and blended schooling – Matura Community and Woodside¹⁹
- La Horquetta South Government – Community Garden by School parents and community volunteer²⁰
- Cocoyea Government – Community Garden by Nutrien and Painting of library and classroom by Republic Bank Ltd²¹
- Palmiste Government – Painting of internal hallways and Infants 1 classroom by Women of Worley

To the end of March 2023, \$1.8 million has been spent with disbursements of 41% to handwashing, 2% to communication and advocacy, 16% to mask wearing, 32% to ventilation and 7% to blended schooling/connectivity. Table 1 shows the breakdown of expenditure to March 2023.

¹⁵ [Cocoyea and Salazar Project Report](#)

¹⁶ [Matura Project Report](#)

¹⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0jCceaut_M

¹⁸ [Video clip Salazar](#)

¹⁹ [Video clip Matura](#)

²⁰ [Video clip La Horquetta](#)

²¹ [Video clip Cocoyea](#)

Table 1: Support to the New Norm Project Expenditure July 2020 to March 2023

SSNN Areas of Support	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total	
Total Income	\$ 856,765.82	\$ 784,495.96	\$ 535,986.00		\$ 2,177,247.78	
Total Expense	\$ (303,790.29)	\$ (967,798.56)	\$ (462,367.40)	\$ (51,233.14)	\$ (1,785,189.39)	
Expense - 1 Handwashing	\$ (278,940.29)	\$ (440,774.39)		\$ (12,165.01)	\$ (731,879.69)	41%
Expense - 2 Communications		\$ (13,437.50)			\$ (13,437.50)	1%
Expense - 3 Mask wearing	\$ (22,500.00)	\$ (163,071.35)	\$ (100,288.00)		\$ (285,859.35)	16%
Expense - 4 Ventilation		\$ (339,815.32)	\$ (241,595.28)		\$ (581,410.60)	33%
Expense - 5 Blended Schooling/Connectivity			\$ (86,196.47)	\$ (39,068.13)	\$ (125,264.60)	7%
Expense - 6 Visibility		\$ (6,850.00)	\$ (13,050.00)		\$ (19,900.00)	1%
Expense - Overheads	\$ (2,350.00)	\$ (3,850.00)			\$ (6,200.00)	0%
Expense - Time of Caring Projects 2022			\$ (21,237.65)		\$ (21,237.65)	1%
Balance for 2023					\$ 392,058.39	

In addition to the Support to the New Norm Project, special works were completed for St Gregory's Anglican Primary School completed in 2021 with left over funding from the Fifth Company Community Impact Project and additional funding from the UWTT Community Fund. This project was prioritised to signal to the community that efforts were underway to improve the hygiene and ventilation conditions of the school in preparation for return to face-to-face school. St Gregory's Anglican Primary is an example of a rural community school in which internet access is not only not affordable to the average family but also generally not of sufficient quality to support consistent attendance at school remotely. St Gregory's was almost 100 % paper packages, and by the start of 2021, the school reported that many packages were not being picked up. The renovation works included²²:

- Addition of new student washrooms including a disability access washroom
- Installation of a grey water system for flushing toilets
- Remedial work on guttering on one side of the school building
- Remedial work to install an electrical sub panel to support the pump for the grey water system.
- Conversion of the old washroom space into a multi-purpose outdoor space for classes in keeping with ventilation guidelines for the New Norm

See Section 5 for the Programme Expenditure details by Component and harmonised projects.

4 Programme Management

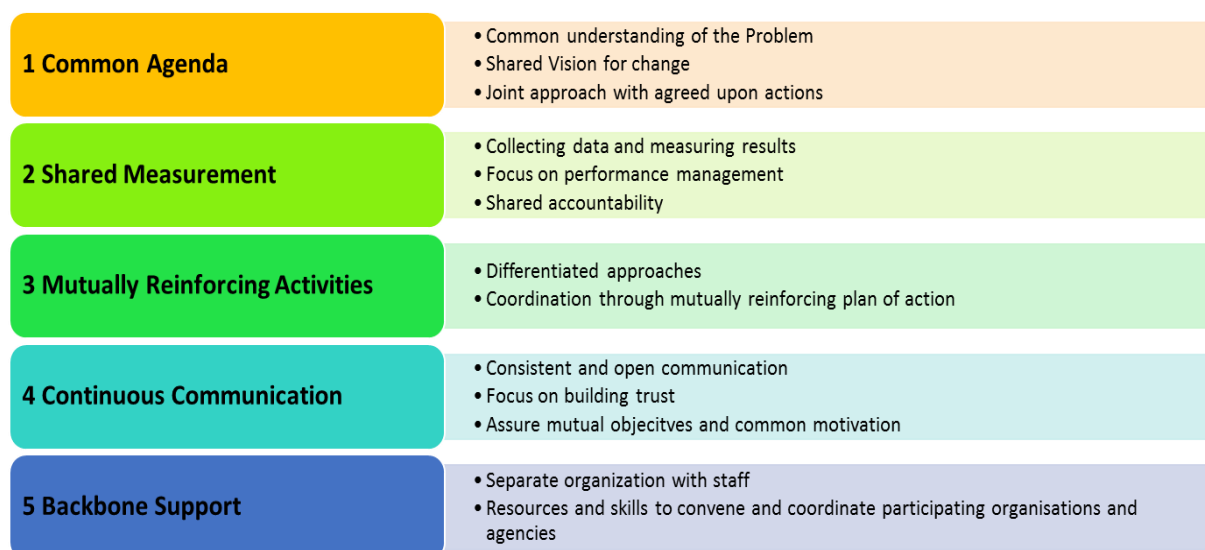
UWTT as the backbone organisation for this collective working programme, supported by implementing partners, has overall responsibility for programme management which include:

- Guiding vision and strategy of the Programme
- Mobilising resources (funding, human resources, gifts in kind) for the Programme
- Establishing shared measurement systems
- Supporting aligned activities
- Building broad based partner and public support

This is in line with the 5 essential elements or pillars for achieving collective impact. Refer Figure 8.

²² [UWTT Annual Report 2021, Overview of St Gregory's washroom renovation \(PowerPoint\)](#)

Figure 8: Five Elements of Collective Working



Key achievements as backbone organisation include:

- Programme designed launched in 2019 and adapted in 2020-2021 for the New Norm²³
- Monitoring framework developed January 2022 (refer Annex 1)
- Increasing implementation of aligned activities in at least 4 components across most schools (refer Figure 9)
- Capacity to monitor and report against metrics improving (refer Table 2: 2019-2022 Monitoring Trends)
- Increasing understanding of principals about the mutually reinforcing components of the Programme
- Allocation of resources from Community Fund seeded the programme with an annual allocation to ensure sustainability of programme activities given the multi-year commitment (refer Table 13)
- Harmonisation and alignment of other UWTT initiatives to the Building Bridges Programme for optimal impact and value of money available to UWTT
- Implementation of advocacy communication campaign in 2021-2022 for return to school via social media ²⁴

Table 9 shows that after 3 years since launch that most schools are actively participating in at least 4 Components, with the lag in the Out of School Time Play Component. The 4 schools recently joined in July 2022 have begun to participate in at least Components 1, 2 and 3.

Table 13 shows that over the reporting period, 58% of programme income was allocated from the UWTT Community Fund with a seed funding at the end of 2020, in anticipation of school reopening, to ensure the sustainability of the Programme moving forward. The Building Bridges Programme funding at the end of March 2023 is at \$2.4 m.

²³ [BBP Framework updated March 2022](#)

²⁴ [Annual Report 2021: Safer in Schools, Safer Together Campaign](#)

Figure 9: Status as of March 2023 of Building Bridges Programme activities by School Community

STATUS 2022/3		Belle Garden AC	Cocorite	Cocoyea	LaHorquetta South	Matura	Nelson Street Boys RC	Salazar Trace	Santa Rosa	St. Mary's Mucurapo Boys RC	St. Mary's Mucurapo Girls RC	St. Gregory's AC	Belmont Boys RC	Mt. D'Or	Palmiste	Patna River Estate	Nelson Street Girls RC	Diamond Vale	Diego Martin Boys
Column1	Column2	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column	Column
C1 (Outcome): Structured Parenting support	Families in Action - Confident Parenting	•		•	•		•	•	•	•							•		
	Family Cash Grants	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•				
C2: Teacher support	NOW! Programme Teacher Training	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•						
	NOW! Programme Teacher Mentorship		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•						
	Classroom Assistant Trainee Pilot Project			•	•	•	•	•	•			•							
	Social and Emotional Learning Programme Training	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
	Social and Emotional Programme (TE) Implementation		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
C3: School leadership strengthened	Regular Principals Meeting	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•				
C4: Out of School Time Play Programmes	Steel Pan Programme									•		•							
C5.: Learning Spaces & Blended Schooling Supported	SSNN Project	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					•	•	•
	Pilot ventilation Project	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•							
	Blended Schooling Connectivity Project			•	•	•		•											
	Community Garden Project			•	•			•											
	NDOC Receptient (2016-2019, 2022)		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•			•		•		•

Table 2: Building Bridges Programme Monitoring Trends 2019-2022

Components	Activity	2019	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
SCHOOL POPULATION		3,905	4,940	4,700	5,781	
# schools		10	15	15	19	
# infant classes (1&2)		29	63	56	69	
Infants Population (Inf 1 & 2)		1,144	1,236	1,161	1,501	
C1 (Outcome): Structured Parenting support: Parents supported to engage in learning						
Families in Action - Confident	# workshops	-	55	45	76	176
	# parents attending workshops	-	284	343	266	893
C2: Teacher capacity increased for foundational skills: Teachers trained and mentoring provided						
NOW! Programme Teacher Training	# teachers trained	24	-	-	19	43
	# principals trained/Sensitized	10	-	-	9	19
NOW! Programme Teacher	# classrooms mentored	17	-	-	17	34
	# students reached	434	-	-	393	827
Teacher Training on Diverse Learning	#Teachers sensitized	69	-	-	-	69
Classroom Assistant Trainee Pilot	# trainees assigned	-	-	-	8	8
Social and Emotional Programme	# teachers trained	-	-	-	29	29
	# principals trained/sensitized	-	-	-	9	9
	# classrooms implementing	-	-	-	26	26
	# students reached	-	-	-	596	596
C3: School leadership and Community strengthened						
Regular Principals Group Meeting	# meeting attended	-	-	8	47	55
Individual school meetings/visits	#visits/meetings	-	-	-	-	-
Family Cash Grants	# grants	-	1,036	409	323	1,768
	# individuals	-	4,079	-	-	4,079
Principals self care session (FIA)	# school principals attending	-	-	-	7	7
Leadership and Literacy Workshop	#school leadership attending	21	-	-	-	21
School supplies and Community food	# schools enrolled with FEEL clubs	11	15	15	15	56
C4: Out of School Time Play Programmes						
Steel Pan Programme	# Music Programme ongoing	1	-	-	2	3
	#students reached	-	-	-	58	58
C5.: Schools for the New Norm & Blended Schooling Supported						
SSNN Phase 1 Project	# handwashing troughs/sinks	-	-	44	-	44
	# masks	-	-	15,127	11000	26,127
	# comms materials	-	-	1,000	100	1,100
Pilot ventilation Project	Fans installed in classrooms	-	-	57	0	57
	#Classrooms ventillation improved	-	-	-	11	11
Blended Schooling Connectivity	# schools Connectivity improved	-	-	-	2	2
Community Garden Project	# school Gardens installed/revived	-	-	-	3	3
NDOC/Time of Caring 2022		-	-	-	9	9
SUBTOTAL						

5 Programme Financing and Expenditure

For the period of the Report, July 2019 to May 2023 inclusive, \$2.028 million of activity has been executed with 100% of the seed Grant of \$1.5 million in 2019 from JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I disbursed at the end of March 2023. Refer Table 3.

About 36% of the programme expenditure has been allocated to administration and overhead with 64% to programmatic activities through contracts and grants, which include.

- Families In Action: Confident Parenting Programme 2020 - 2023
- Morris Centre: Teacher training and mentoring Neurodevelopment of Words Programme 2019 - 2020, 2022 to 2023
- Moms for Literacy: Principal leadership support 2020
- Let's Read: Little Community Libraries for younger readers 2021 and completion of Digital Library Space in Matura Government 2023
- Social and Emotional Skills Building Pilot Project in partnership with Think Equal
- Classroom Assistant Trainee Pilot Project – July 2022- July 2023

However, the programme administration as outlined in Section 4 allowed the design of UWTT's COVID 19 Response and Recovery projects of Family Cash Grants, Support to the New Norm Project and Renovation of St. Gregory's washrooms - to harmonise with the strategy of Building Bridges and align to the activities of Components 1, 3 and 5.

In summary, the grant has helped UWTT leverage new resources and implement activity for the benefit of 18 primary schools and over 5,000 students in the reporting period. This has been achieved while keeping the integrity of the Programme intact and budget available for full activity for 2022-2024. The implementation value of the Joint Projects managed through Building Bridges totals \$5.4 million for the Reporting Period July 2019 to May 2023. Refer Table 4.

Families Cash Grants although funded through a different Programme Fund is aligned and managed through the Building Bridges Programme. Also, the Support for the New Norm Project. No additional management fees are leveraged on these other programmes/projects to date. Essentially this means that the management overhead, directly allocated to Building Bridges, for the period 2019-23 of \$661 K for stewardship of \$5.4 million project is about 12.5%. Refer Table 5. To note in table 5, for the purpose of attribution, Family Cash Grants are allocated equally between Community Building and Parenting Support (component 3 and 1 respectively).

As stated in Section 4, over the period \$4.28 million has been mobilised for the Building Bridges Programme with the intention of having at least 2 years programmatic funding available for programme implementation. In addition, \$2.2 million was mobilised for Support for the New Norm Project (refer Section 3.5 Table 1) for a total of \$6.5 million over the reporting period. At the end of 2022, 58% of programme resources is allocated from the Community Fund to ensure the sustainability of the Programme and impact. Refer Table 6.

Table 3: Building Bridges Programme expenditure by Component July 2019 to May 2023

Expense types	1 Structured parenting support	2 Teachers Support	3 Leadership and Community Building	4 OST Play Programmes	5 Learning Spaces	6 Programme Management	Grand Total	
Expense - transportation		\$ (3,500.00)				\$ (3,000.00)	\$ (6,500.00)	0%
Expense - supplies/resources		\$ (41,000.00)		\$ (2,018.25)			\$ (43,018.25)	2%
Expense - refreshments		\$ (5,587.50)	\$ (115.00)				\$ (5,702.50)	0%
Expense - programme/grants			\$ (13,500.00)				\$ (13,500.00)	1%
Expense - contracts/grants	\$ (400,000.00)	\$ (659,398.94)	\$ (30,000.00)	\$ (95,801.81)	\$ (63,799.38)	\$ (800.00)	\$ (1,249,800.13)	62%
Expense - admin/overhead						\$ (710,334.67)	\$ (710,334.67)	35%
Grand Total	\$ (400,000.00)	\$ (709,486.44)	\$ (43,615.00)	\$ (97,820.06)	\$ (63,799.38)	\$ (714,134.67)	\$ (2,028,855.55)	
	20%	35%	2%	5%	3%	35%		

Table 4: Building Bridges Programme expenditure with harmonised projects by year July 2019- May 2023

Programme Component	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total
1 Structured parenting support		(100,000.00)	(150,000.00)	(50,000.00)	(100,000.00)	(400,000.00)
2 Teachers Support	(89,100.00)	(73,000.00)	(21,643.75)	(289,381.28)	(236,361.41)	(709,486.44)
3 Leadership and Community Building	(115.00)	(13,500.00)			(30,000.00)	(43,615.00)
4 OST Play Programmes				(46,425.93)	(51,394.13)	(97,820.06)
5 Learning Spaces			(41,299.38)	(20,000.00)	(2,500.00)	(63,799.38)
6 Programme Management		(135,050.00)	(236,878.77)	(225,265.91)	(116,939.99)	(714,134.67)
Grand Total	(89,215.00)	(321,550.00)	(449,821.90)	(631,073.12)	(537,195.53)	(2,028,855.55)
SSNN		\$ (303,790.29)	\$ (967,798.56)	\$ (462,367.40)	\$ (59,348.15)	\$ (1,793,304.40)
St Gregorys Washroom Block Rehab			(821,706.64)			(821,706.64)
Family Cash Grant (school communities)		(441,500.00)	(204,500.00)	(154,500.00)	(39,500.00)	(840,000.00)
TOTAL	(89,215.00)	(1,066,840.29)	(2,443,827.10)	(1,247,940.52)	(636,043.68)	(5,483,866.59)

Table 5: Building Bridges Programme expenditure with harmonised projects by component July 2019- May 2023 (Family Cash Grants allocated equally to Component 1 and 3; Support to the New Norm and St Gregory's Washroom Renovation to Component 5)

Programme Component	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total
1 Structured parenting support		(320,750.00)	(252,250.00)	(127,250.00)	(119,750.00)	(820,000.00)
2 Teachers Support	(89,100.00)	(73,000.00)	(21,643.75)	(289,381.28)	(236,361.41)	(709,486.44)
3 Leadership and Community Building	(115.00)	(234,250.00)	(102,250.00)	(77,250.00)	(49,750.00)	(463,615.00)
4 OST Play Programmes				(46,425.93)	(51,394.13)	(97,820.06)
5 Learning Spaces/Blended Schooling		\$ (303,790.29)	(1,830,804.58)	(482,367.40)	(61,848.15)	(2,678,810.42)
6 Programme Management		(135,050.00)	(236,878.77)	(225,265.91)	(116,939.99)	(714,134.67)
Grand Total	(89,215.00)	(1,066,840.29)	(2,443,827.10)	(1,247,940.52)	(636,043.68)	(5,483,866.59)
	2%	19%	45%	23%	12%	(5,483,866.59)

Table 6: Building Bridges Programme income by source against expenses July 2019 to June 2023

	± 2018	± 2019	± 2020	± 2021	± 2022	± 2023	Grand Total	%
INCOME/EXPENSE								
Income	101,612		3,095,000	462,593	620,500		4,279,705	
Income - corporate			100,000		20,500		120,500	3%
Income - foundation	101,612		1,495,000	64,838			1,661,450	39%
Income - UWTT Community Fund			1,500,000	397,755	600,000		2,497,755	58%
Expense		(89,215)	(321,550)	(449,822)	(631,073)	(348,270)	(1,839,930)	
Grand Total	101,612	(89,215)	2,773,450	12,771	(10,573)	(348,270)	2,439,775	

6 Summary of Lessons learnt and Implications for going forward

- I. The scale of learning loss is greater for low income, vulnerable communities, and younger learners - leading to need for greater investment per community

Since the onset of the global pandemic, the effects of the school restrictions have been discussed and researched in order to advocate for re-opening of face-to-face schooling, assess the nature and extent of learning loss and identify practical ways to address this loss. The evidence is clear that the pandemic restrictions and mitigation measures to keep schooling going by switching to remote schooling has resulted in a significant scale of learning loss particularly for the following groups/communities²⁵:

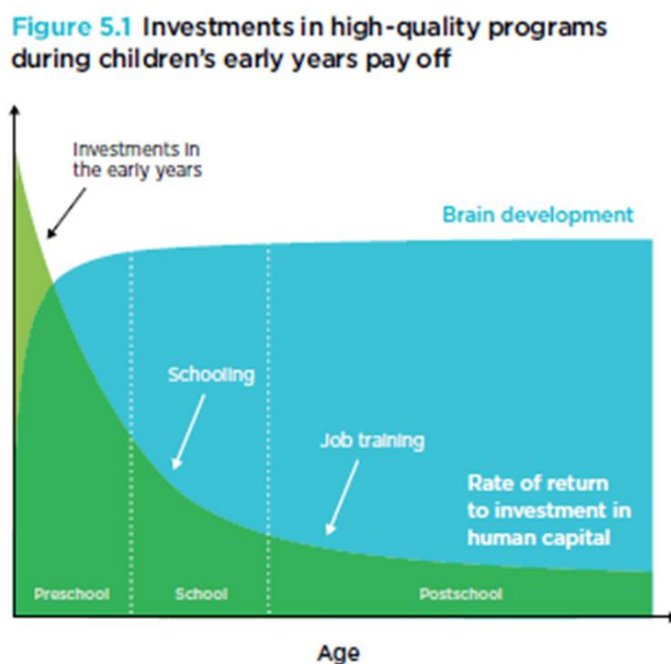
- Low-income families
- Households with low education attainment
- Vulnerable communities including children with disabilities, single caregiver households, rural communities.
- Early childhood age group²⁶

Much of this is related to the fact that what made these communities vulnerable to high levels of learning poverty pre-COVID were only amplified by the pandemic and related restrictions.

Research on the effects on the under 5-year-olds has shown that there has been a perfect storm of factors at a time when there is significant brain and body development. Refer Figure 10. This could mean that 1 year of lost learning at this age results in 2.8 years lost extending into secondary school. *“The youngest learners faced a double disadvantage, often left out of remote learning and school reopening plans. Despite robust evidence that investments in pre-primary education can yield long-lasting benefits for children, pre-primary education was least likely to be prioritized for reopening”.*

This in fact is the same rationale which drove the design of the Building Bridges Programme to focus social investment in this age group, therefore making the programme more relevant now. Refer Figure 11.

Figure 10: Rate of brain development highest in under 5s

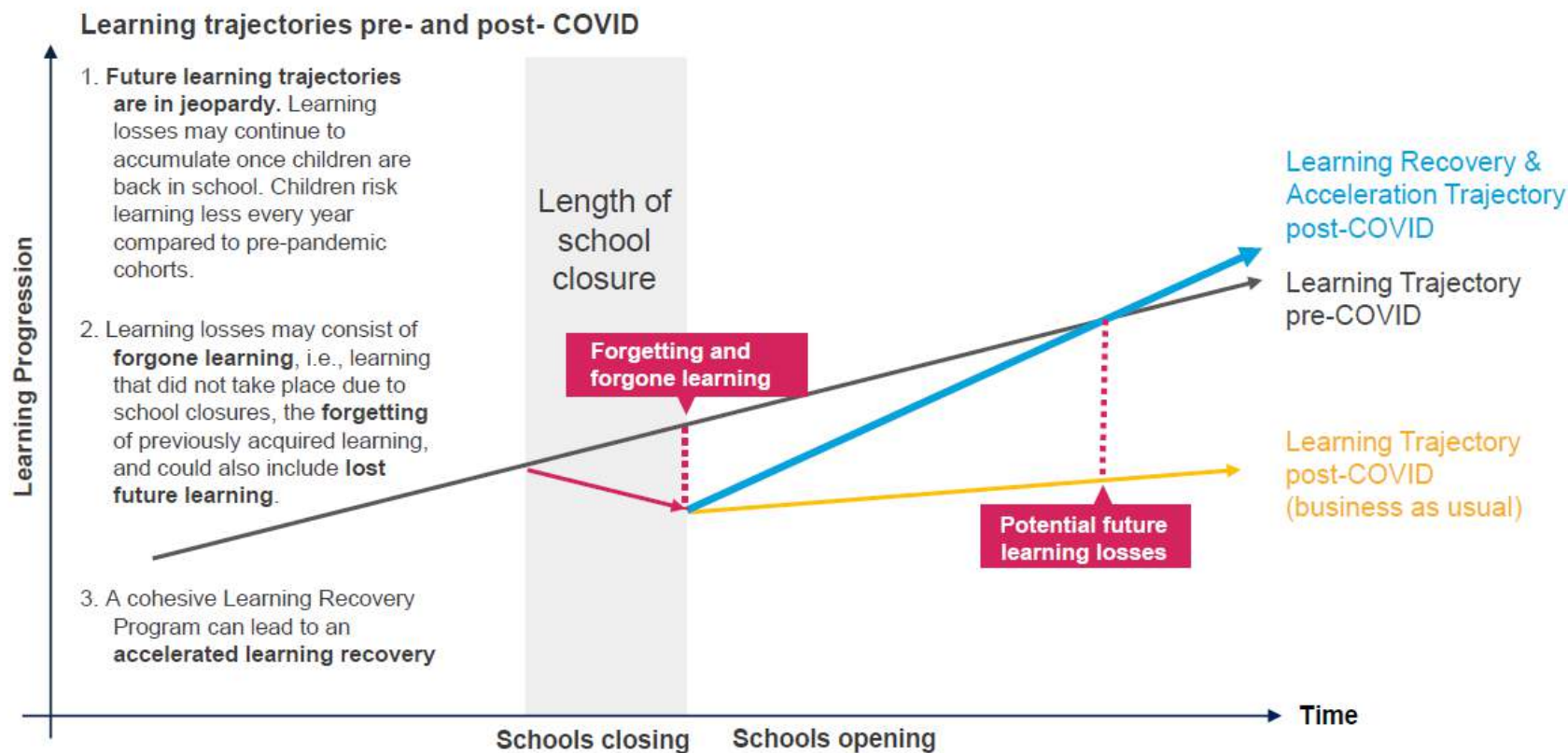


Source: WDR 2018 team, based on Carneiro, Cunha, and Heckman (2003); Martin (2012).

²⁵ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/416991638768297704/pdf/The-State-of-the-Global-Education-Crisis-A-Path-to-Recovery.pdf> [World Bank Document](#), 2021

²⁶ Uğraş M, Zengin E, Papadakis S, Kalogiannakis M. Early Childhood Learning Losses during COVID-19: Systematic Review. *Sustainability*. 2023; 15(7):6199. [Sustainability | Free Full-Text | Early Childhood Learning Losses during COVID-19: Systematic Review \(mdpi.com\)](#)

Figure 11: Schematic showing that Future learning is at risk without accelerated action²⁷



Source: UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank. 2021. *The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery*.

²⁷ https://mdpi-res.com/d_attachment/sustainability/sustainability-15-06199/article_deploy/sustainability-15-06199-v2.pdf?version=1680750617

Since Trinidad and Tobago closed in person schooling for 2 full years, it can only be assumed that the potential for long term effects on the cognitive, physical, and mental well being of the children UWTT serves can extend into adulthood unless more investment is made.

This body of evidence is substantiated from the experience in the schools supported by the Building Bridges Programme.

The focus group for the Programme are the Infants 1 and this has been extended into two infant 2 classes where there has been interest (Nelson St Boys RC and Cocoyea Government). Teachers are reporting that there are significant learning loss, behavioural issues, and high levels of absenteeism. One teacher remarked that *'in my entire teaching career, September 2022 term had the highest level of absenteeism.'* Other teachers shared that in Term 1 *'the children are unsettled where they can't sit still, finish tasks on time, follow simple instructions.... they are behind in their development milestones, both social and academic so many disruptions'*. Many of these incoming Infants 1 would not have attended pre-school at all as pre-schools and primary schools only opened for in person schooling in April 2022. It is highly unlikely that these children will be able to cope with a normal Infants 1 curriculum or 'business as usual'.

II. The Risk Assessment of the Programme is higher

The Building Bridges Programme as designed in 2019, based on lessons learnt from the Fifth Company Community Impact Project, was a moderate to high-risk programme. As for many social investment programmes – the gap in education, health and income has only widened because of the pandemic and recovery will take time for the communities UWTT serves.

The Risk Management plan as laid out in the original design was updated in 2020-22 with the addition of activities in all of the Components (refer Annex 2). As laid out in the UNICEF/UNESCO/World Bank Path to Recovery, the adaptation of the Programme included:

- a. Promote returning to the classroom through back-to-school campaigns.
- b. Provide cash transfer to support families to attend remote schooling and return to school.
- c. Prioritise on teaching the fundamentals (addition of social and emotional skills)
- d. Support teachers continuously with mentoring and classroom assistant trainees
- e. Support teacher wellbeing and resilience
- f. Invest in students' safety, nutrition, and access to water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities.

This has improved the relevance of the Programme for accelerating input to the beneficiaries, however the inherent systems approach of multifaceted inputs by the Programme is critical to achieve sustainable change or impact. This means that more resources are needed over a longer period to achieve the goal of these children reading to learn by standard 2 Risk and impact is not only programmatic, but the risk is also that these children will not reach their full potential without more inputs – impact will not be achieved in the short term and will take time and dedication. More than in 2019, the learning loss among the BB communities is requiring UWTT to dedicate and extend resources to infants 1 and infants 2 if impact is going to be achieved. The teachers are telling us that.

However, a key risk remains the level of commitment by the school principal and teachers in order that the Programme benefits the children we seek to help. UWTT now has a good geographical spread in terms of school communities served, and the need in each of these communities is greater than ever before. There is a need to stay the course with these communities which will require more resources and more trust. Refer Annex 2 for the updated Risk Management Plan based on lessons learned.

III. Balance focus on building capacity for monitoring and executing cost effectively

Given the growth in complexity of the Programme, UWTT has started developing its capacity for monitoring and supporting the implementing partners to report against the Programme Framework.

In the first 3 years, it is sufficient to monitor against inputs and outputs, which UWTT already has the capacity to do, and a key development was the design of a monitoring framework, aligned to the logical framework and which also begins to monitor risks.

It is fully recognised that non-profits do not have access to national data sets for higher level outcomes and impact tracking, so UWTT as the backbone organisation is beginning to plan to more systematically use survey data and social audits (participant stories) as proxies for that data. Outcome and impact data will be reported in 2025 and 2027 respectively. Planning for these will start in 2024. Efforts will also be made to work with partner schools to develop a pilot to track progress of children using current national standard testing, as available.

IV. Improving implementation to scale in 2023 and 2024 within selected communities

Non-Profits are at times driven by demands of funding sources to add new communities or schools without the level of financial commitment to the impact agenda of the Programme. While this is the reality of fund raising, UWTT needs to clear that impact will not be achieved with activity only in one component, or part of one component. There is still a significant amount of work to be done in each community over time to achieve sustainable change, or impact, for the children and their families. COVID-19 restrictions and the learning loss discussed in lesson 1, has increased not only the relevance of the Programme but also the scale and scope of the underlying challenges.

The 2023 budget and workplan (refer Annex 4 and 5) have been developed based on the need to accelerate inputs in innovative yet focused ways to meet children where they are now, not some notion of where they are supposed to be by virtue of age or class curriculum. This will be necessary for years to come. The budget for 2023 is set at \$1.55m for Building Bridges, with budget available for Support to the New Norm implemented under Component 5 of \$440K and for Family Cash Grants under Component 3 of \$220K. It is estimated that this level of programmatic expenditure of at least \$1.5m to \$2m will be required for 2024 for the 15 schools identified.

Implementation to scale in the current school communities should be the focus with the funds available until it is clearer the source of funds for 2025-2027. This can be achieved by ensuring that all BBP initiatives are being implemented in all infant 1 classes and then in infant 2 classes. Teachers trained in 2022 will be stronger in delivering the programme and hopefully more committed advocates in the next academic year. Some schools, teachers move with their class to infants 2 and have already asked if they can continue the programme with UWTT support in infants 2. The children need this level of continued and sustained input to catch up by Standard 1. The focus of the Programme should be to improve full

implementation in the school communities with whom UWTT has selected to partner. For 2023, this means that the denominator or unit for scale is the number of infants 1 and 2 classes and the target for full implementation is 56 classes. Refer Table 2.

V. Building capacity for advocacy

UWTT implemented advocacy through action projects during COVID which included:

- Dare to Care social media campaign to promote responsible behaviour for COVID-19
- The Support to the New Norm Project in primary schools
- Buy a mask, give a mask event to promote mask wearing and safe return to in person school.
- Safer IN school, Safer Together social media Campaign to advocate for return to in person school.

This capacity if required of the backbone organisation to go beyond the routine visibility and marketing for fundraising approach and find ways to develop messaging aligned to public education (including that of partners and supporters, promoting positive action around a key policy issue. UWTT will continue to build this capacity within the BBP as monitoring improves, to share data and the narratives that could add to the ability to transform lives and achieve greater impact.

Annex 1: Building Bridges Programme Monitoring Framework adapted October 2022

Summary of Impact, Outcomes and Output Indicator Targets				
<p>Super Goal: To improve learning and educational attainment levels in high need communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary School Academic Performance increasing • % of children successful at SEA in first attempt • Increasing numbers of children successful at Primary School 			
<p>OC: Foundational and Social Skills strengthened in children 5-12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children reading to learn by age 8. • Reduction in student absenteeism • Reduction in teacher absenteeism • Safer Standards for the New Norm in schools • Schools’ digital capacity improved for the New Norm 			
<p>C1: Structured Parenting support provided on regular basis</p>	<p>C2: Teacher capacity increased for foundational skills, identify diverse learning styles, self-care.</p> <p>Classroom Assistant Trainee Project designed and implemented to support teachers and infants classes</p>	<p>C3: School leadership and School Communities (Parent Support Groups (PSGs), Parents Teacher Association (PTA), local CBOs) capacity strengthened</p>	<p>C4: Out of school time play programmes supported for holistic and resilient child development.</p>	<p>C5.: School Improving quality of essential school spaces for foundational skills and blended schooling</p>
<p>Outcome Indicators</p>				
<p>Knowledge and attitude of parents attending sessions improving to support child attending school and parenting for literacy.</p>	<p>Capacity for language development and SEL</p> <p>Capacity to support children adapt to New Norm through play and movement.</p> <p># Children referred to Guidance Counsellor/Social worker</p>	<p>PTA or PSG and TSG meeting regularly</p>	<p>Structured OST Programmes developed and available to children at affordable cost.</p> <p># Students identified with different learning styles enrolled in OST programme</p>	<p>Improved library and reading spaces, staff rooms, play areas.</p> <p>Capacity for New Norm and Blended Schooling</p>

Summary of Impact, Outcomes and Output Indicator Targets				
Activity Indicators (output)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Parenting workshops conducted per school year • # Parents attending workshops • Parenting Materials produced tailored to younger parents. • Parenting Materials tailored for COVID 19 stressors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Teachers completed training in Neurodevelopment of Words (NOW!) • NOW! Programme mentoring provided for infants 1 classes. • # Teachers trained and supported with self care routines • # Teachers completed training on diverse learning needs • #Teachers trained in Think Equal SEL Programme • # Classroom Assistant Trainees supporting teachers with supervision of breaks and adapting to the New Norm guidelines • Materials provided for jolly phonics and SEL. • Capacity to identify developmental gaps early and ability to manage behavioural issues in classrooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership meetings with UWTT Project team • Active PTA/PSG in school • # Family cash grants disbursed • #unique families reached • #schools supported to enroll in FEEL Clubs for school supplies and food support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # OST programmes operational • # Students enrolled in at least one non-academic OST programmes 	<p>Improved library and reading spaces, staff rooms, play areas.</p> <p>SSNN Project 2020-2022</p> <p>Critical capacity gaps addressed: School connectivity; COVID safety capacity - handwashing, ventilation of learning spaces, wearing masks, communication; digitisation of learning spaces</p>

Annex 2: Risk Management Plan (updated June 2023 based on lessons learnt to date)

	Risk	Response (Mar 2021)	Response (March 23)
1	Inadequate financial resources	<p>The Programme is UWTT’s core Community Impact Programme and as part of the UWTT role, UWTT will actively seek grant funding to seed the Programme.</p> <p>UWTT will proactively engage with implementers to work within the designated communities to the shared purpose and common agenda – and will therefore be able to ring fence some of the Community Fund to the Programme.</p>	<p>In keeping with UWTT’s role as backbone organisation to mobilise financial and in-kind resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate annually from the Community Fund to the Programme • Work with implementing partners and community stakeholder to encourage in kind resources such as volunteers to support the elements of the programme e.g., FIA extended self-care workshops to principals and participate in self-development sessions of classroom assistant trainees, community volunteers in Matura. • Seek grant funding opportunities proactively.
2	Implementers (NGOs and Professional contractors) not willing to engage in certain locations	<p>Moving to 10 schools provides a larger number of communities for Implementer convenience, and we are also hoping to work with stronger implementers on how we can lower unit cost as we move to scale. This risk is related to available financial resources</p>	<p>Mainly through the work under Support to the New Norm, UWTT now partners with 15 schools in the BBP. While some of this expansion can be absorbed in going to scale in joint activities, there is growing risk that UWTT does not have adequate financial resources and backbone capacity to meet 15 school community needs in a comprehensive and impactful way. This risk will be managed by maintaining integrity and focus of the Programme to ensure cost effectiveness on current communities, by increasing coverage within schools e.g., increasing number of infants 1 classes active, expanding to infants 2 classes</p>

	Risk	Response (Mar 2021)	Response (March 23)
3	Parents not willing or able to engage consistently	Lack of consistent parental engagement in programme activities is a challenge, and therefore without including efforts to address throughout the programme is a key risk for not achieving results. This risk is managed through flexible programming and creation of a programme that is tailored to the needs of the parent community and making visible connections to their children's success. UWTT has included the Building Bridges Families in our Family Cash Grant Programme started in 2020 as part of our COVID -19 Response Programme	<p>This remains a key risk particularly as parents struggle to recover financially, physically, and mentally from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. However, parents are critical to their child's development and efforts will continue to engage them with flexible programming and content that is relevant to their needs within the resources of the Programme.</p> <p>The UWTT Family Cash Grant Programme has been made a permanent activity and aligned to the incoming Infants 1 to encourage return to school with less absenteeism.</p>
4	Teachers not willing or able to engage consistently	Teacher absenteeism and overload are also notable risks to the Programme. Teacher training while important, is insufficient. The Programme is being designed to engage with Teachers to determine how best they can be supported in the classrooms and with the school leadership on how this can be sustained. This is a particular risk with COVID-19 and the shift to remote schooling as our only modality since March 2020. UWTT Support to the New Norm Project aims to improve capacity of schools for the safer return of students to in person schooling	Teacher burnout, absenteeism due to illness, and systemic weaknesses which do not adequately cover allowed casual and vacation leave of teachers has worsened since the return to in person school for various reasons. UWTT is allocating more than 40% of the BBP to directly training and supporting teachers. Continued support will also be provided to improve prioritized learning spaces and connectivity to improve teacher productivity and ease of access to research and self-development materials.
5	Lack of agreement on need to improve systems to improve access	Development and implementation of advocacy programme to involve more stakeholders, both in school and community and with policy makers. This has been extended to our Support to the New	Inequity has been amplified by COVID-19 in education, health, and income arenas – making it harder for low-income communities and younger children catch up. UWTT will continue to build its capacity through the BBP

	Risk	Response (Mar 2021)	Response (March 23)
		Norm Project which is an advocacy through action Project.	for key policy issues that address inequity and access to quality learning opportunities.
6	Low level of engagement for Out of School Time Activity	Key challenge is to recruit consistent, qualified, and affordable coaches for these programmes with a focus on participation of all rather than competition alone or finding the elite cohort. The Programme will focus on advocacy on the importance of inclusive OST play. This component will be even more necessary for COVID recovery when children return to in person schooling as many have not had the chance for outside play.	There is an increasing recognition of the need for OST Play for the recovery of children’s physical and mental health. UWTT can continue to mobilise resources and implement steelpan programmes as a major opportunity until the Pan in schools programme is restored. Also, there is the opportunity to network with the TT Moves initiative of the Ministry of Health aimed at reducing obesity levels.
7	Programme outcomes not sustainable	Advocacy programme will buffer some of this and UWTT will develop a monitoring system to determine some measure of need for longer support	Critical to maintain harmonization with all programmes within UWTT and focus on achieving impact in the communities to be served.
		Flexibility of Programme allows for alignment of components to other funders CSR programmes to introduce both concurrent and follow up support	

Annex 3: UWTT Building Bridges Projected Budget 2023 (approved December 2022)

Component	Partners	Description	Total	TOTAL 2	%
1: Parenting Support	FIA	Complete Confident Parenting workshop modules and set up Parent Support Groups	200,000	200,000	13.0%
2: Teacher Support	Morris Centre, Think Equal, CKFTO	NOW! Training and mentoring, Think Equal SEL training, Classroom Assistant Trainees		669,562	43.4%
3 Leadership development	FEEL	Meetings with Principals, FEEL Clubs		114,000	7.4%
4: Out of School Time	OST Projects	OST music tutor during term , July music camp	110,000	110,000	7.1%
5 Learning Spaces				75,000	4.9%
6 Project Management	Advocacy and Communication		40,000	40,000	2.6%
	Transport/ Other	Monthly site visits to rural schools.	40,000	40,000	2.6%
	UWTT staff	HR costs	295,375	295,375	19.1%
	Total			1,543,937	

Annex 4: UWTT Building Bridges Programme Workplan 2023

ID	Task Name	Qtr 1, 2023		Qtr 2, 2023			Qtr 3, 2023			Qtr 4, 2023			Qtr 1, 2024		
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
1	Building Bridges Programme 2023														
2	Component 1: Parenting Support														
3	Confident Parenting Workshops by FIA														
4	Conduct Confident Parenting workshops Term 2														
5	Conduct Confident Parenting workshops Term 3														
6	3 year Program review with FIA														
7	Start engagement with schools for T1 2023														
8	Submit Draft Final Report														
9	Review and Approve Final Report														
10	Design of 2023-2025 continuation														
11	Parent engagement via orientation T1 2023														
12	Conduct programme Term 1 2023														
13	Review Linkage to Family Cash Grant Program														
14	Component 2: Teacher Support														
15	NOW Language Development														
16	Teacher Training update Term 2														
17	Conduct NOW Mentoring Term 2														
18	Teacher Training Term 3 2022														
19	Conduct NOW Mentoring Term 3														
20	Review year 1 outcome														
21	Teacher Training 2023														
22	Conduct NOW Mentoring Term 1														
23	Think Equal Social/Emotional Skills														
24	Conduct TE monitoring Term 2														
25	TE Workshop														
26	Conduct TE monitoring Term 3														
27	Review year 1 outcome														
28	Teacher Training 2023														
29	Conduct TE monitoring Term 1														
30	Managing different learning styles														
31	Review with CKFTO workshop revision for 2023														
32	Conduct CKFTO Training														
33	Classroom Assistant Trainee Pilot Project														
34	Term 2 Implementation														
35	Term 3 Implementation														
36	Trainee development sessions														
46	Review project outcome														
47	Cohort for 2023-2024														
48	Recruitment														
51	Orientation														
52	Probation - Term 1 2023														

ID	Task Mod	Task Name	Qtr 1, 2023		Qtr 2, 2023			Qtr 3, 2023			Qtr 4, 2023			Qtr 1, 2024	
			Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
53		Component 3: Leadership engagement													
54		Principal Meetings													
66		Self Care Support													
67		Self Care Support 1													
68		Self Care Support 2													
69		Support principals with school supplies (FEEL clubs)													
70		Component 4: Out of School Time Programmes													
71		Implement 2 Pan OST Programmes													
72		Complete handover of pans to MBRCS													
73		Start pan programme with Infants Term 3													
74		Vacation camp prep and implementation													
75		Conduct survey on access to OST activity in schools													
76		Component 5: Learning Spaces improvement													
77		Support to the New Norm Project Completion 2023													
78		Matura Blended Schooling and Digitised Library Spa													
79		Salazar Trace Digitised Library Space													
80		La Horquetta internet connection upgrade													
81		Salazar Trace bathroom rehab													
82		Community Gardens Support													
83		NTOC/NDOC Volunteer Projects list													
84		Manage project list schools													
85		Project Management													
86		Annual letter of commitment with schools													
87		Profile of communities													
88		Monitoring Framework and results													
89		Continued development of metrics reporting													
90		Quarterly communications on progress													
91		Quarterly communications on progress 1													
92		Quarterly communications on progress 2													
93		Quarterly communications on progress 3													
94		Quarterly communications on progress 4													
95		Contract management with implementers													
96		Grant reports													
97		JBFMT Grant													
98		RBL													
99		Scotia Foundation TT													
100		Woodside													
101		Think Equal Term 1													
102		Fifth Company CI Project close off Report													



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