



JAMAICA DIASPORA EDUCATION TASK FORCE PREPARES FOR: 2nd BIENNIAL ADVANCEMENT IN EDUCATION SUMMIT 2016 & JTA MIDDLE MANAGERS WORKSHOPS...by Karlene Largie

Coming on the heels of what has been considered the most engaging and successful Jamaica Diaspora Conference 2015 this past summer in Jamaica and the most sustainable work done by the Jamaica Diaspora Education Task Force since the 2013 Diaspora Conference, the Education Task Force is not wasting any time in continuing their mission to advance education in Jamaica to realize **VISION 2030**.

Led by its convener Leo Gilling, the weekend of October 30 to November 2, 2015 saw the largest gathering of Diaspora and their Stakeholders from Jamaica gathered in South Florida to strategically plan for **the 2nd Biennial Advancement in Education Summit 2016 and the JTA Middle Managers Workshops in Jamaica from March 21 to 24, 2016 in Kingston, Jamaica**.

While there were opportunities to meet local community leaders (of Jamaica parentage) to network and develop mutual relationships, the heart of the weekend took place on Day One. Some twenty five Jamaicans representing the Diaspora, the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA), the Early Childhood Commission (ECC), and principals of Colleges in Jamaica spent the day reviewing Summit 2014 and the 6-Year Plan that arose from the first convening, preparing the time table and itinerary, workshops, follow ups, approach, funding, expectations and assignments.

Co-chairpersons were determined and between now and March 21st to 24th, Dr. Mark Nicely from the JTA and Karlene Largie from the Northeast USA based Union of Jamaica Alumni Associations (UJAA) have been charged with leading the Force to Summit 2016.

The ExSeed teacher exchange training in STEM with Loma Linda University (LLU) in California will take place for the 3rd consecutive year next summer. In addition, LLU staff will visit Jamaica to train 100 teachers in 2016. The JDETF will again be staging Camp Summer Plus.

Teacher empowerment, one of the items on the 6-Year Plan, will be addressed at the Summit. Led by the Diaspora and strongly supported by the JTA, workshops for Middle Manager teachers will be taking place. The Broward Alliance of Caribbean Educators (BACE) is on board to present a relevant syllabus fitted to the education system in Jamaica. The Early Childhood Commission is working with UJAA to address a couple of their needs surrounding the training of the EC practitioners as they collaboratively work towards certification of those schools.

The Summit has the full support of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. However, the JDETF believes that collaboration with other ministries will bring the effort to another level as health, nutrition and youth would make a significant difference to planning and executing the advancement of education.

Since that October gathering, already several conferences calls have lit up the communication lines between Jamaica and the Diaspora regions, including the UK who is already planning their presence and participation.

As noted over that weekend, education is every one's business so everyone can play a role. Put Summit 2016 on your calendar.

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