



Some of the children from primary and secondary schools seen here receiving much needed school uniforms and other supplies from the Eden Lodge Youth Charitable Trust and its partners.



Billie-June Langdon

Growing needs

by Shamar Blunt

Two local charities are reporting a drastic increase in the number of parents seeking help to get their children ready for the new school year which begins in two weeks.

The Eden Lodge Youth Charitable Trust Programme and the Sandy Lane Charitable Trust, which worked together to provide uniforms to several students, said during the presentation of the items at Abed's in Bridgetown on Tuesday that scores more had come forward for assistance.

"This year, we saw an increase [with] over 400-odd children [from] less fortunate families being assisted from the Trust with the back-to-school programme," reported public relations officer for the Eden

Lodge Youth Charitable Trust, Billie-June Langdon.

"That number has increased dramatically and we are pleading to corporate Barbados for assistance. A little goes a long way; it might be little to us but it will be big to families who can't afford it and those less fortunate."

Sandy Lane Charitable Trust trustee Pippa Challis also confirmed that the number of people seeking support had increased significantly this year, and she thanked the several corporate sponsors who supported the **Soca Goes Gold 4** event – undertaken by the Eden Lodge Youth Charitable Trust in July – and other initiatives aimed at raising money to assist.

"The sheer numbers this year, we needed extra support.... The Eden Lodge

Youth Charitable Trust, their increase in the requests for uniforms and support and back-to-school lunches, etc. have been huge this year – has increased threefold. That is obviously because of the dreaded [COVID-19] pandemic which we feel like we are coming out of.

"But there are an awful lot of families. We get an awful lot of phone calls weekly of people still needing help," Challis said.

Operations Director at Abed's and Co. Ltd, Alex Abed expressed similar sentiments.

"This year especially, post-COVID, there are more families than ever who really do need the help, and if we can play our part we are very happy to do so," he said.

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MORE SEEKING HELP FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL, CHARITIES REPORT



Pippa Challis

Africa-Caribbean payment system needed for investment and trade

The lack of a payment settlement system between Africa and Barbados and other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) states could slow the integration officials are seeking to achieve between the two regions.

This caution has come from Chief Executive Officer of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) Mike Ogbalu, who said he believed such a system was necessary to

make the proposed deepening of investment and trade relations a reality.

"When you talk about infrastructure and logistics to support trade, tourism, investments and so on, one key element is payment. Trade doesn't happen without payment. Tourism, when people move they have to be able to spend. Investment is also the movement of funds. So, clearly, if we do not have payments sorted then the integration we would like to have may not happen," Ogbalu said during the recent AfriCaribbean Trade and Investment Forum at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, which was held under the theme One People, One Destiny: Uniting and Reimagining our Future.

He said the PAPSS, which was officially introduced by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) in January this year, could serve as a settlement system between CARICOM and Africa.

However, he acknowledged that there would need to be infrastructure put in place by the relevant authorities including central banks.

PAPSS is a payment clearing and settlement system that allows for real-time cross-border transactions among African states in their local currencies.

"Bringing it to the Caribbean . . . if we are able to put in place an infrastructure, first of all, or support CARICOM and the ECCB [Eastern Caribbean Central Bank] to put in place an infrastructure that brings together all the central banks in the Caribbean and then put an infrastructure that connects that platform all the way to the PAPSS . . . that will have a major accelerating effect on everything we do together as a people," he said.

Ogbalu said having the payment system in place would eliminate the need for third-party correspondent banking and would lend to greater efficiency and more timely settlements.

"We think that by bringing efficiency to payments we can actually accelerate trade, accelerate tourism. When people travel they want to spend and they want to know that those

transactions can be settled," he said.

"PAPSS has created a payment reel that will be able to guarantee that member states are able to trade with each other in their domestic currencies. What that would do is begin to lower the hunger for third-party global currencies," he said.

Coming out of the three-day conference, which ended last Saturday, officials have pledged implementation of strategic partnership

between the business communities in the Caribbean and Africa with the objective of fostering bilateral cooperation and engagement in technology transfer, innovation, transport, trade, investment, tourism, culture, and other services.

During the conference, several agreements were signed, signalling the start of the intended deepening of relations between the two regions. (MM)

Correction Walk for the Cure on October 2

The CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank Walk for the Cure will be held on October 2 and not October 3 as previously reported in Barbados TODAY.

The event will begin in Warrens, move to the stretch of the ABC Highway between Warrens and Waterford, and end at the National Botanical Gardens where after-walk activities will be held.

The event, which is returning after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is organised to raise funds for the Barbados Cancer Society's Breast Screening Programme.

The money raised from this year's event will go towards purchasing a stereotactic biopsy machine valued at \$170 000, to help accurately pinpoint microcalcifications and abnormalities. (AH)



Mike Ogbalu