

4. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2022. MIDWEEK NATION.



More families in need, says Eden Lodge Charitable Trust

THE DEMAND on the Eden Lodge Youth Charitable Trust's back to school programme is increasing.

Yesterday, public relations officer for the trust, Billie-June Langdon, said they were helping around 100 more families than last year.

"The numbers have increased dramatically. This year we're assisting more than 400 families in just our back to school programme alone, an increase of about 100 families. We do have other programmes and projects ongoing as well, chief among them our Christmas programme," she said.

Langdon was speaking during the latest back to school programme donation, this time at Abed's & Co Ltd in Swan Street, The City. Previous donations had occurred earlier this year at Woolworth and Cloister Bookstore. Seven children received items yesterday, from book bags, stationery, text books, shoes and uniforms.

Langdon asked corporate Barbados to lend a hand.

"I want to plead to corporate Barbados and to those who can help to come on board with this programme,

with this charity, or other charities like ourselves to assist. A little to you or I might be a lot to somebody else, so as much as you can contribute would be appreciated," she said.

Proceeds from the programme were raised through the **Soca Goes Gold 4** event at **Kensington Oval** in July as well as from donations by the Sandy Lane Charitable Trust. Representatives of the sponsors and partners spoke as well, including Alex Abed, operations director at Abed's. He said there were more families than ever in need and they were happy to

play a part in helping them.

"Based on being on the floor here and seeing the demand, it's been significant. With Cave Shepherd no longer offering school uniforms, we have seen an uptick in the amount of people looking for back to school gear," he said.

"There are always those in need. We've seen parents having to decide between buying more than one uniform for four children or just one for each of them. So we're just thankful we could lend a hand to these agencies," he said. (CA)

CXC urged to engage stakeholders

by **TRE GREAVES**
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SOME EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS say the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) must consult meaningfully to avoid a repeat of some disappointing occurrences of recent years.

Although there appears to be no wide-scale discrepancies with the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) results this year, deputy general secretary at the Barbados Union of Teachers (BUT), Asha Yearwood, and two representatives of the Group of Concerned Parents and the Caribbean Coalition for Exam Redress, Paula-Anne Moore and Khaleel Kothdiwala, made that suggestion yesterday following the release of the 2022 examination results.

Changes

Yearwood said although CXC postponed this year's examinations by three weeks after complaints that teachers did not have enough time to complete the syllabi because of the COVID-19 pandemic, she suggested more could have been done.

"I think a lot of the concerns will be about what CXC did to address the concerns of teachers

and students who say they did not have enough time to prepare," she said.

"I know they pushed back the exams by a few weeks but other groups were calling for changes to the structure and I think these could be things that could have been taken into consideration."

Concerns

During a press conference on Monday, director of operations Nicole Manning said CXC was concerned that only 37 per cent of students passed mathematics at the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate level, some students took cellphones into examination rooms, and many school-based assessments were not submitted.

Registrar Dr Wayne Wesley also said they were concerned about the number of students leaving schools without certification.

Yearwood said these were issues that could be addressed by accepting suggestions put forward by stakeholder groups.

"I noticed CXC itself spoke about the lower performance of students. . . So this is a case where you have to look at the results, analyse them and see what is needed to get the children back on track."

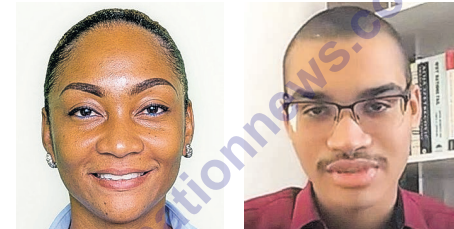
When contacted, Kothdiwala said although

there appeared to be no widespread discrepancies when compared to 2020, when thousands of students protested, there was still cause for concern.

"We have been getting a few reports of inconsistencies where grades received did not match what was reasonably expected but we are investigating and following up those cases. However, there does not appear to be a wide-scale problem as we have had [in 2020] but there are some isolated instances," he said.

He added that the mathematics issues had to be addressed.

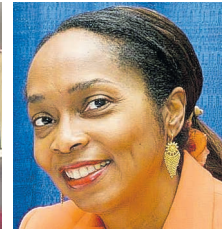
"We are very concerned about the



DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY at the Barbados Union of Teachers, Asha Yearwood. (GP)



KHALEEL KOTHDIWALA of the Group of Concerned Parents and the Caribbean Coalition for Exam Redress. (FP)



PAULA-ANNE MOORE of the Group of Concerned Parents and the Caribbean Coalition for Exam Redress. (FP)

quality of the pass rates in mathematics because 37 per cent of students passing is a cause for significant concern. Pandemic exams have taken place twice before but we have not seen this level of failure [before] but we have not seen any attempts to address why this may be," he said.

Lessons

Meanwhile, in a joint statement, Moore and Kothdiwala said they were also concerned about the CSEC English A, Social Studies, and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) and Caribbean Studies grades.

They said there were "significantly more errors on exam papers and charged that the papers and syllabi were not changed to reflect the pandemic challenges.

"All the foregoing shows continued issues with quality assurance, responsiveness to student needs, lack of accountability and transparency. The lessons learned from the pandemic experience mark a real transformational opportunity for CXC and the national and regional education systems.

"If we revert to pre-pandemic status quo/business as usual [it will be] at our children's peril.

We need to examine how responsive CXC's product offering can be made in recognition of this.

"If we wish to be strategically competitive globally, our testing and wider education strategy needs to observe what the rest of the world is doing and adapt accordingly, or CARICOM risks being left behind," they added.

During her assessment in St Lucia on Monday, Manning said they were prepared to meet with stakeholders.

"It is the CXC's intention to be meeting with various stakeholders especially over the September, October, November period to ensure that preparation for 2023," Manning said.

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