

# More partnerships needed to develop rural primary schools

LEESA KOW, general manager of remittance service provider JN Money Services Limited (JNMS), has issued a call for more partnerships to be developed to increase resources to rural primary schools.

Close to 33 per cent of students fail to attain mastery level in the Grade Four Literacy Test, Kow said pointing to statistics from the **Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica** by the Planning Institute of Jamaica. She said this was com-

mensurate with the fact that many schools, particularly those in rural Jamaica, continue to face crippling resource shortages, contributing to the low educational outcomes.

The high level of poverty of communities in which some of these institutions exist, she added, impacts on their ability to access resources. Rural poverty has risen by more than five per cent due to economic challenges, the latest Survey of Living Conditions

found, moving to 22.5 per cent – the largest concentration of poverty in Jamaica.

“To achieve the 100 per cent literacy target by 2015, set by our Ministry of Education, for students at the grade four level, and the overall goals outlined in the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan, we have to develop stronger partnerships at all levels of the society to channel more resources to these schools,” Kow appealed.

“That includes establishing more meaningful private-sector partnerships and more robust linkages with our brothers and sisters in the diaspora,” she added, pointing out that initiatives such as the Jamaica Partnership for Education (JPE) provide a good avenue for companies and Jamaicans living abroad to contribute to economic and social development.

The project, which was launched in May 2009 as a remittance-philanthropy initiative, targets donations from Jamaicans based overseas to improve the education system in the island state. The project works closely with the Ministry of Education to achieve the 2015 literacy target.

Kow noted that with more than a million Jamaicans living overseas, who contribute about \$2 billion through remittances to the Jamaican economy, tangible linkages exist, which can be further developed.

She said that JNMS, through its JN Money Transfer brand, has been actively raising funds for the JPE, a project by the Jamaica National Building Society (JNBS) Foundation, and encouraged other companies with similar linkages to become part of the JPE.

Since the inception of the project, JNMS has raised more than \$1 million through its overseas locations from Jamaicans and well-wishers living abroad. The funds were used to purchase state-of-the-art literacy tools that benefit more than 1,770 children to date, and provide training for the schools’ teachers and administrators, to improve the teaching and learning processes in primary schools.