

# 'I Support' opens window to raise funds

FOR THE first time, Jamaican community groups and charities will be able to raise funds for projects from contributors anywhere in the world using the English-speaking Caribbean's first locally owned and operated crowdfunding website, [www.isupportjamaica.com](http://www.isupportjamaica.com).

The site, established through a partnership between microfinance company JN Small Business Loans Limited (JNSBL) and the JN Foundation, went live last weekend, allowing people anywhere in the world to donate to projects featured on the site.

A second phase, which will allow people anywhere to lend funds to local micro-entrepreneurs, is to be launched in September.

Saffrey Brown, general manager of the JN Foundation, said the website creates a platform for Jamaica to develop solid partnerships beyond diplomatic ties to assist the nation with achieving its development targets.

"This is not a new approach to funding," she said, "but it is taking an idea that has been working for many countries around the world, including Haiti and parts of Latin America, and transforming it into something which is uniquely Jamaican and is designed to support our aspirations and development goals under the Vision 2030 plan. It provides a means for our Jamaicans abroad, and, indeed, anyone in the world to partner with Jamaica and assist a project or entrepreneur," Brown said.

## METHOD OF SELECTION

She explained that projects featured on the site would be selected through an application process, whereby local non-governmental organisations and groups complete an expression of interest form which is submitted to the foundation for assessment. Persons and organisations may request a form by sending an email to [info@isupportjamaica.com](mailto:info@isupportjamaica.com).

Brown said profiles, which would

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include information on the charitable projects and the entrepreneurs, would be uploaded to the site.

Persons who sign up to I Support Jamaica will be able to use a credit card to donate or lend money, depending on whether they desire to contribute to a local project or provide a loan for an entrepreneur.

Underscoring that JNSBL is a social enterprise which upholds the mutuality concept framing the work of its parent organisation, the Jamaica National Building Society, Philip Bernard,



CONTRIBUTED

Saffrey Brown, general manager of the JN Foundation, shows Nathaniel Peat, a United Kingdom (UK)-based entrepreneur and member of the Jamaica diaspora in the UK, how to use [isupportjamaica.com](http://isupportjamaica.com) at the 2013 Diaspora Conference held in St James last month. I Support Jamaica, which is the English-speaking Caribbean's first crowdfunding website, went live last weekend, allowing persons to donate funds to assist projects being implemented by local charities and community groups featured on the site. Persons will also be able to lend funds to local micro-entrepreneurs when phase two of the project is launched in September.

general manager of JNSBL, said [isupportjamaica.com](http://isupportjamaica.com) emphasises JNSBL's "mandate to promote the development of the micro- and small-business sector through access to financial services, and by extension,

the Jamaican economy".

"What many of our communities and our people need is the access and the opportunity, as well as the understanding that there are people in our country and in the world who

believe in their hopes and aspirations and will support them. This website facilitates that concept, and we believe it will assist to address the constraints to growth of our communities and micro-entrepreneurs."