



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: **HIGH**

Church on the Rock Members benefit from Virtual Information Session on Social Grants and Services

In keeping with its vision of being a dynamic service-driven organisation that delivers premium social services towards the achievement of sustainable human and social development, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) continues to engage faith-based organisations with information on its various grants and services and how such could be accessed by those in need. Earlier today, April 6, 2022, members of the Church on the Rock (local and international) benefited from the session, commonly referred to as PIES. PIES main focus is to bring relevant and pertinent information about the Ministry's various programmes, grants and services, directly to citizens in their respective communities, with the aim of clarifying issues related to access, whilst treating with concerns and responses from the Ministry.

Delivering opening remarks, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services stated "Within recent times, a major area of priority of the Ministry is to ensure that all our various stakeholders, including Faith-Based Organizations, continue to hear from us and receive up to date information, so that you all can assist us in reaching those we are unable to reach." She further noted that the engagement with Church on the Rock today, is a vital aspect of the Ministry's overall objective to reach the vulnerable so that they can be equipped with information and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Minister Cox also took the opportunity to shed light on two projects under the ambit of the National Social Mitigation Plan; the Social Services Empowerment Unit (SSEU) and Social Transformation and Empowerment Unit-Uplifting People (Step-Up). She noted that the programme will allow families to improve, identify and develop their own capacity to successfully navigate community and other resources to resolve issues.

During the engagement, the Ministry virtually showcased some of its core grants offered by the Social Welfare Division and the National Social Development Programme (NSDP). This was complemented by information about the Sowing Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) Programme, which is also promoted under the NSDP, and supports the development of entrepreneurs who cannot qualify for assistance at the established financial institutions. Additionally, representatives from the Ministry's National Family Services Division were on hand to provide critical information to address issues such as proper parenting, coping with stress, domestic violence, as well as, counselling and psycho-social support services for couples, children and families in crisis.

In the question and answer segment, numerous issues were raised concerning the eligibility for grants and special circumstances where exceptions may be given for the access to grants. These concerns are subsequently used to inform a number of policy initiatives and projects aimed towards a more responsive delivery of social services. Several persons were also eager to access information about capacity building and funding for non-governmental organizations, considering that the church runs a free pre-school for the community of Morvant. Reverend Benjamin Agard, Pastor of Church on The Rock stated that he was immensely grateful for the session as it would bring much needed relief to the communities that need it the most.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to collaborating with all sectors to ensure that no one is left behind. For more information on how a PIES session could be conducted for your NGO, FBO or CBO, persons may contact the Corporate Communication and Education Unit via email, ccu@social.gov.tt



Reverend Benjamin Agard, Pastor of Church on The Rock tells Minister Cox how much he appreciates the PIES session