

INSPIRING THE CHANGE

A heartfelt conversation with

RECOMMENDATIONS TO TRANSFORM

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

AND MAKE IT

a Better Place

FOR OUR NATION'S CHILDREN



By a group of dedicated educators and humanitarians who are committed to ensuring that our nation's children, every single one of them, is given the opportunity to bloom in this our diverse and culturally rich, rainbow country of Trinidad and Tobago.

15th March, 2024

Dr. The Honourable Keith Rowley,
Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Office of the Prime Minister
13-15 St. Clair Avenue Port of Spain, Trinidad

Dear Prime Minister,

This letter and booklet are in response to your public request in 2022, for any ideas which will make our beautiful twin island of Trinidad and Tobago a better place to live. Please refer to my letter dated 28th September, 2022.

This booklet is intended to initiate a very proactive conversation in addressing the way our most precious resource, the nation's children, are valued and educated. At the very core of this change, are simple and pragmatic suggestions that we must all adopt, if we are serious about facing the challenges that plague our nation and bringing a total paradigm shift in our thinking.

The team kept at the forefront of our thoughts, the change we want to see in the future for all our children and our country. We are convinced that it must start with the education of all our stakeholders: our parents, our teachers, our leaders and our children. The dialogue must be centered on lifting the morals, values, and ethical behaviour in all our citizens and how these impact on creating a caring, compassionate, hard-working and resilient citizenry who will put country ahead of self and contribute to the sustainable development of our economy.

It also provides a realistic roadmap to transformation of a society starting from the cradle and continuing all through school. A respectful, well-bred and educated child will be an asset to our homes, parents, community and to our entire country. This book, we aren't just reading; we are igniting a movement, building a dialogue, and, most importantly, making a commitment to the future of Trinidad and Tobago. This is not a passive narrative; it's an active pledge for transformation.

Our aim is a simple and caring one: To ensure that this blueprint reaches the desks of decision-makers, the minds of the general populace, and the hearts of every Trinbagonian who hope for better days.

As our Honourable Prime Minister, we are confident that you will do everything in your power to lead the change, engage all your competent and knowledgeable stakeholders and resource persons from the different

sectors of our workforce to begin the transformation of our society.

Our entire team of twelve will be happy to personally meet with you at your convenience, to discuss the way forward with these recommendations.

Together, let us reconstruct the Trinidad and Tobago we deserve.

Sincerely,

Feroza Rose Mohammed

MBA- National Award Hummingbird Medal Gold (2006)

Yasmin Rahaman-Singh

MBA, BSc. - Lead editor

National Award Public Service and Education Order of Merit Silver (2023)

/f/ Team of Twelve

CC Her Excellency Christine Karla Kangaloo O.R.T.T.
The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

The Honourable Kamla Persad- Bissessar SC, MP
The Leader of the Opposition

The Honourable Farley Augustine, Chief Secretary
Leader of the Tobago House of Assembly

Dr.The Honourable Mrs. Nyan Gadsby Dolly
The Minister of Education and Culture

Endorsements

Dr Nasser Mustapha

Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Deputy Dean-Graduate Studies UWI

The authors must be commended for this remarkable effort. Using a very objective approach, it gives an analysis of young people growing up in today's world and the pressing challenges they face.

It looks realistically at the difficulties facing the home and goes on to discuss different stages in the education system and the problems faced therein. It provides important guidance for parents, teachers, policy makers or anyone who cares about the future of our country.

The contributing authors are qualified and experienced in their respective fields and have provided very deep insights into the root causes of some of the major issues facing the country including underachievement, delinquency, crime, health, drugs, inequality and poverty.

Dr. Naailah A. Ali

B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D.

I have opted to make a contribution as a testimonial to the tenets covered in this book. Coming from a family where my parents struggled to make ends meet and having been educated via the public secondary and senior comprehensive school system, I was still able to attend University, eventually attaining a PhD.

Though the latter years of my journey required that I be self-motivated and disciplined, my formative years were shaped by my family (core and extended). My parents ensured that I had a safe environment, despite the challenges faced, I always felt loved and supported. Grandparents assisted with ensuring I had nutritious meals, aunts and uncles often pitched in to pay for extra lessons and books.

Within the public school system there were many good teachers who inspired me. The diverse range of subjects offered at that time including Agriculture, Home Economics, Art, Music and Industrial Arts (in addition to the coveted Science and Business subjects), allowed students to learn skills with real life, tangible applications.

Sporting activities were also promoted. Having to interact with many other students from different backgrounds allowed me to embrace diversity and to have a holistic view on many issues. It also instilled in me an appreciation

for my country, and subsequently, my region. Truly the pillars that support a child must be constructed by a community, a village, and requires a multifaceted approach.

Dr Indera Sagewan

Competitiveness Consultant and adjunct lecturer, UWI

This booklet is a labour of love for the children of our country and for the future of this nation. It is a cry from the bosoms of mothers, daughters and professionals for action in an environment of chaos and hopelessness. The solutions are noble gestures of hope and change and a point from which to start much needed conversations and calls for action. I endorse this work.



Table of Contents

Preface	1
Parents: Their duties and responsibilities	2
Parenting in Crisis	6
Recommendations	8
With God... Anything is Possible	12
Education	14
Health	20
Sports and Physical Activities	22
Nutrition	24
Transport	26
Textbook Rental System	27
Security at School	29
Final Words	31
About the Authors	33
Transforming Trinidad and Tobago Together: A Journey Accessible to All	38

***"FAMILY IS NOT AN
IMPORTANT THING. IT'S
EVERYTHING."***



The hands that cradle the family.



**"THE GREATEST LEGACY
WE CAN LEAVE OUR CHILDREN
IS HAPPY MEMORIES"**

Preface

Thoughts that shape our minds...

Many of us, are not fully aware of what makes a good parent and the impact it has on the development of the child. Unfortunately, therein lies our downfall in our society of Trinidad and Tobago.

Understanding the basics of raising a child, and what is actually required of us, must be reviewed if we are to really make a meaningful difference. This is timely as we witness the breakdown in the moral fabric of our society.

Each and every citizen has a definitive role to play as we commit to uplifting the ethics and values that will transform our society into one that will live up to the expectations of our National Anthem.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago continues to implement several programmes with various agencies and learned professionals to engender change however...

Change has to come from the adults: parents must lead the way!

Parents:

THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/the-role-of-parents>

Although a parent's role in their children's learning evolves as kids grow, one thing remains constant: we are our children's learning models. Our attitudes about education can inspire theirs and show them how to take charge of their own educational journey.

Love and quality time

- *Parents are the most important people in a child's life.*
- *The decision to have children should be well thought out, as it is one of the most important life changing commitments.*
- *Parenting requires dedication, responsibility and love.*
- *Research concludes that events during pregnancy have a profound impact on a child's development and risk of chronic diseases in the future. Therefore, during pregnancy it is critical to have a proper diet and to provide the best environmental support and care, as*

there is a direct impact on the well-being of the fetus.

- *Whether the child is born of biological parents or adopted, the baby must be welcomed, nurtured and loved. This acceptance is immediately felt by the child and establishes the role of the parents. The child will automatically return that same love and affection to parents and family.*
- *It is the responsibility of parents to provide a caring and loving home.*
- *From birth onwards, the child must be brought up with the reverence and love of Almighty God. The powerful message is that each child, each parent, each person, is accountable to God and this, must be understood by all. The tone is therefore set for accountability to the Divine and this shapes and guides present thoughts and behaviour.*
- *Parents must show genuine affection and find the time to laugh, talk and have fun with their child. These quality times, from birth to completion of secondary school are critical for the development of the well-balanced child.*
- *Parents are the primary and most influential role model for the child. This is a responsibility that should not be 'palmed off' to someone else.*
- *This calls for conscious parenting.*

Good Parenting – values and morals

- *Parents and family must instill good values and ethical behaviour as this will be the foundation for exemplary conduct: love, kindness, compassion, honesty, fairness and respect for all.*
- *Parents must inculcate in their children that, 'Here every creed and race find an equal place.' Parents and guardians, by example must treat all, irrespective of ethnicity, age, religion, and socio-economic background with the same degree of respect and tolerance. These common values must be ingrained in all children from infancy, that every single person is worthy and important and that love for all of humanity is love for God Almighty.*

- Parents must encourage their child to use good judgment in choosing their friends and how they spend their time. Productive activities are important as they contribute to a well-balanced child.
Model this for your child by planning activities that build confidence as well as self-esteem and help the child develop skills and competencies for life.
- Parents should take the time to get to know the social groups that their child is part of and spend time with the child's friends and his/her parents.
- Parents must teach and emphasize respect for property, life and country. Emphasize the moral code that taking anything you did not work for is stealing. Likewise taking a life is punishable by law and unacceptable by God Almighty. Parents must never condone stealing, fighting, violence and murder. Show your child that there is a better way to live and to be contented in life.
- Parents must build their child's self-esteem to become assertive, self-confident and empowered individuals and not to succumb to peer pressure. Teach them to stand up for what is right, just and fair.
- Especially in these times, parents must regulate the social media presence of their child as this is one of the most disruptive influencers. Parents need to do their research and make better informed decisions.

Parents must see the value of Education

- Parents must see the value in education and transfer that to their child's education. In so doing, ensure that the child attends school and support the child with all school activities and homework.
- Be a good parent at home and at school.
- Parents should exercise kindness and consideration in communicating with their child and help them to achieve goals at home, at school, at community, country and in the global environment.

- Parents must learn and exercise good conflict resolution skills:
 - ✓ Speak with your children instead of shouting, cursing and resorting to violence with them.
 - ✓ Assess what went wrong and what lessons can be learnt.
 - ✓ Honour children with the respect they deserve and listen to their viewpoints.
 - ✓ Be firm, enforce consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
 - ✓ Guide, mentor and celebrate the wins.
- Parents must teach their kids to live according to God's law "Love thy neighbour as thyself."
- If these simple everyday habits are instilled in your child, then change can take place in the home, school, community and our beloved country of Trinidad and Tobago.

Parenting In Crisis...



At present, there are some parents who do not understand what is expected of them as parents and the following scenarios plague the life of the child...

- The priority is not the child and too often they have no time for their children.
- There is no proper provision for the basic needs: clothes, food, love and decent shelter.
- Too often the family life is disruptive with complications in relationships and extended families and as a result, parents are unable to properly care for their children.
- A series of unfortunate scenarios manifest and oftentimes the children suffer from serious physical and mental abuse. Sadly, this trauma affects them throughout life.
- Many children are abandoned, as young as they may be, are unloved

and uncared for and must now fend for themselves. They are left unsupervised, do not attend school, fall prey to gangs and are lured by the temptations of illegal activities.

- Many children are abandoned by their parents and it is the grandparents /guardians who are now obliged to take care of these children. There is a generational divide which complicates the relationship.
- Children suffer emotional, physical and psychological trauma from the ill treatment meted out by parents. Failure to address these issues leads to a society in crisis. Unfortunately, it is the children who suffer the most.

Recommendations



" Brainstorming" for new ideas.

In order to 'save' our society, the government must intervene in this crisis and take responsibility to ensure the following:

- A very comprehensive Parent Education Programme must be made compulsory for all first-time parents and where necessary for any parent who needs help. This will ensure that parents give their children the love and support to grow and become confident, empowered citizens of the future.
- That the Social Welfare System continues to intervene in every reported case and give its assistance without fear or favour. Where specific problems exist, intervention is essential. Both parents and children should have professional counselling and other services deemed necessary.
- A Family Court in each constituency and the installation of DNA and Lie Detector equipment with adequate mechanisms to expedite and

resolve cases in the best interest of the child. These equipment and technologies are essential if this country is to mitigate crime and the breaking of the laws.

- Encourage families to take an active role at school, in sport, in music, and neighbourhood activities which reinforce good values and shared expectations to build community and country spirit.
- Government must lead and assist with programmes which are sustainable. Short term policies do not engender change in the long run. There must be an integrative approach to changing the culture of raising children and building a sustainable, safe and equitable society. Partnerships with the respective religious institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations, corporate businesses, and the community must be strengthened and given the support to foster change that is so greatly needed at this time in our country.
- While the laws mandate that ALL children must attend school until the age of sixteen, this must be enforced by the relevant authorities and when broken, consequences must be applied.
- Parents and children who consistently refuse to accept change for the better, must be held accountable. Corrective measures must be communicated to these parents.
- A child needing medical care, counselling and specialized intervention must be afforded this service.
- Functional and basic lessons in numeracy and literacy must be taught in a holistic manner so that each child is comfortable and confident with his or her level of learning. All students are NOT the same and so there must be a differentiated curriculum catering to their abilities and innate talents.
- In cases of teenage pregnancy, mandatory attendance by student in school until she finishes her schooling, must be enforced. A strong appeal for the state to monitor and provide assistance for baby care on the

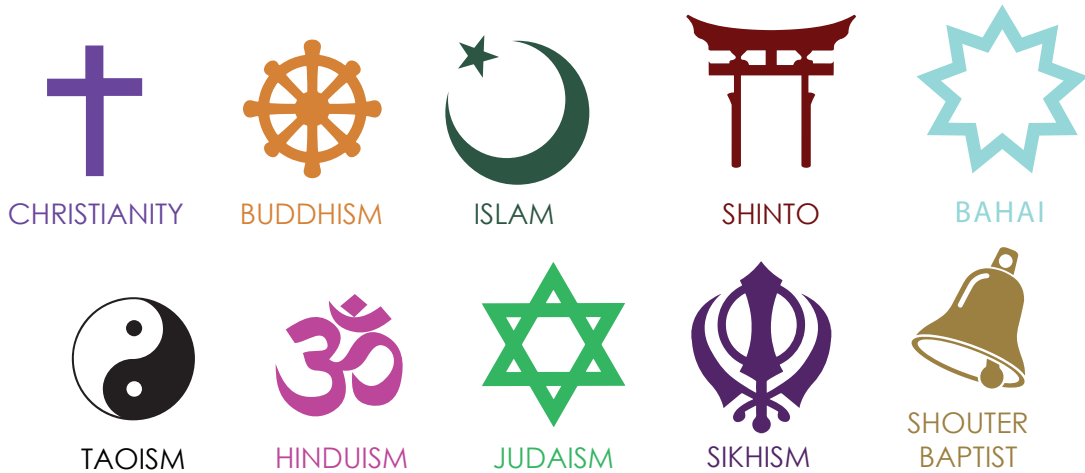
on a path of recovery and growth.

- All members of parliament should support these projects and initiatives to educate and transform a child's life. This means supporting legislature, and where necessary amend the existing laws to save our children and the future Trinidad and Tobago.



With God Anything Is Possible

...THE PLACES OF WORSHIP



Let us all start by trying to recognise each other's beliefs and culture.

This will bring about respect, tolerance, and harmony among us all. We must understand that there is only one God, and we are all God's children.

“Mankind is one Nation.”

We hold the view that if our parents and children do not have divine inspiration in their hearts, there can be no change. We must find ways to inculcate in our adults and children that God must play an important role in their lives.

- The Inter Religious Organisation should initiate more effective strategies and programmes to elevate the moral compass of their congregations. This will have a profound positive effect on the mindset of our peoples.
- We encourage special and consistent appeals to the parents and the public at large, to seriously take responsibility to raise a spiritual, respectful, honest and humble child.
- We support the call from religious leaders to encourage children and parents to attend their places of worship and be proactive in

community-based activities.

- We share the belief that there should be a focus on:
 - Inculcating the love of the Almighty God in the hearts of all peoples.
 - Workshops and programs (which can be done during the day for non-working parents) on the role and expectations of parents from a religious perspective and to transfer these values at the home.
 - Nation building where the common shared values of honesty, respect, religious tolerance, racial harmony, equity and integrity must be upheld and practised by all.
 - Specialised workshops on handling conflicts and disagreements in a God-fearing manner.
 - Counselling and other services to build strong and civil communities.
 - Assisting their less fortunate members of their congregation.
- Likewise, there should be unified consensus on advertisements, songs and programs that promote and sanction universal values that are healthy and desirable in raising young minds. There should be censorship and regulations to ensure that standards are maintained and values preserved in the interest of our children. Adult and mature programs which are shown on television, in full view of young and adolescent children, with curious and inquisitive minds, should not be encouraged. This will call for strict penalties on those who break the guidelines.
- Education and communication on this are necessary to promote a change regarding what is acceptable and the dangers when this is violated. For example, songs with explicit racism and sexually loaded advertisements and lyrics are dangerous to the mindset of our children and society and should be called as such.

Education



*Trinidad Guardian- Claxton Bay Junior Anglican School, on Thursday 8 September 2022.
(Image by RISHI RAGOONATH)*

Illiteracy, illiteracy is man's greatest enemy
It's your duty, yes, your duty, stamp it out completely
Ignorance always impedes progress
Education saves you much distress
So learn, learn, learn, as much as you can
For the nation's future is in your hand...

Mighty Sparrow

Review of the Education System

In Trinidad and Tobago all children must attend school until the age of 16 years. There is no doubt that it works for a good 30% of the student population, however, the majority of students does not benefit from the existing education system for a number of reasons. This results in students who are disenfranchised from the school environment and are deemed misfits to society. There is a dire need to re-examine the curriculum and ensure that every young student leaving the school system has functional numeracy and literacy skills to become a productive member of society. The Minister of Education must address with urgency, many shortcomings of the current education system.

There is an urgent call to revisit the following schools and the teaching/learning process with the aim of adding value to all students:

- Pre-schools
- Kindergarten
- Primary
- Secondary
- Vocational
- Special schools
- Other

A good start to transforming the educational system is to examine the best practices in many existing schools. The data confirm that the faith-based schools are among the best performing schools in Trinidad and Tobago. Likewise, the benchmarks of success in government and private performing schools should be celebrated.

We need to examine all these educational institutions with the following benchmarks of all-round development and success:

- Academic success: SEA, CSEC, CVQ, CAPE.
- Creative Talents
- Exposure of students to a varied programme of activities: art, music, song
- HFLE- Health, Family Life and Education
- Leadership and involvement in co-curricular Clubs and activities with an emphasis on drama, sports, festivals
- Strong Morals and Values Education Programme
- Technical and Vocational Skills
- Volunteerism and Community Work
- Social skills and non-academic courses
- Civic duties and responsibilities
- Etiquette
- Work Ethics and Professionalism

At the Primary and Secondary Level:

- Unfortunately, the current system of “No child left behind” means that those students who score less than 30% are still placed in the secondary school system alongside their classmates who are higher achievers. This scenario is real and leads to a myriad of problems for the education system and its stakeholders. The current education system must be revamped with strategies and mechanisms to meet the needs of our different learners.
- There is an urgent call for Remediation Schools, Post Primary Classes and a robust series of Vocational and Skills Programmes at the post primary level.
- At both the Primary and Secondary levels, ensure a varied curriculum that exposes students to all-round activities: Music, Dance, Sports, Academics, Clubs, Competitions, Debates and

Agricultural activities.

- We support the institution where denominational boards are given the right to select their own teachers, and the 20% which preserves the religious ethos of the schools. Without faith and belief in God, our students are left without that spiritual guidance. In fact, we strongly recommend that religious education be part of every school's curriculum.

Diversity in our children

- Curriculum and appropriateness of such must be addressed in all schools. It is foolish to think that all students have the same intelligences. Our students are differentiated in their aptitude, attitudes, skills and innate talents. Some are born to work with their hands while others are good at spatial and cognitive learning. They are all different and equally important and Trinidad and Tobago must value the multiple intelligences in all our children.
- We can surmise that when many of our students fall out of the school system without any skills or competencies, they are more susceptible to fall into a life of crime, gangs and drugs.
- There is a crisis in our education system where the curriculum is irrelevant to the needs of many of our students.
- We strongly recommend a return to the technical and vocational schools, skills training centres, YTEPP courses, community-based learning that equip our young population with employable skills.
- We must be open minded and use the best models in our country to lift all students to achieve success, self-confidence and self-reliance. Our students must be given opportunities to work and develop exemplary work ethics and to value hard work and not be dependent on the state. Our students must aspire to support the prosperity of the country and not “what our country can do for us”.

There must be a change in the culture of our future generations and the seeds of change must be planted in the education system and all its stakeholders.

Human Resources

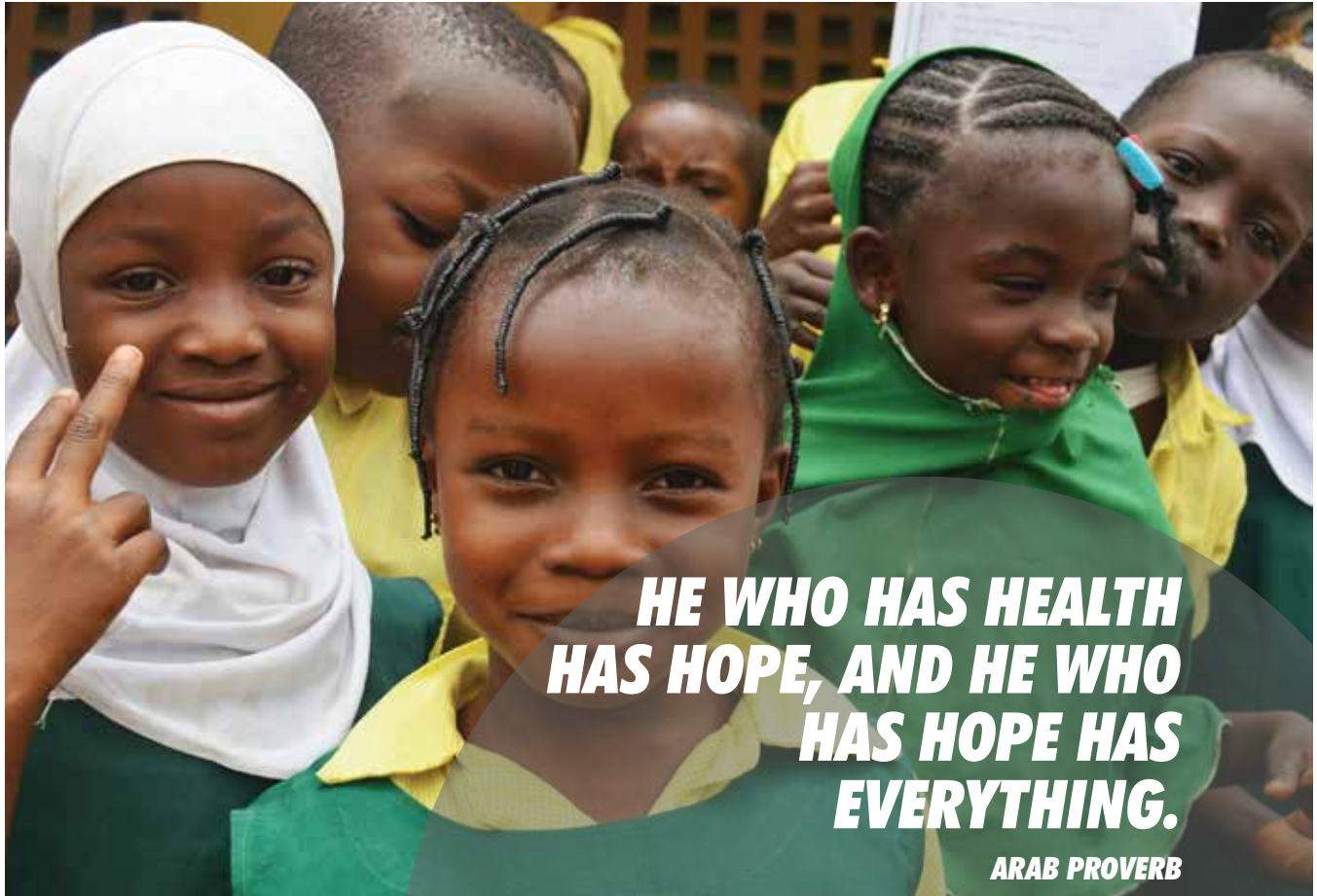
- If qualified and nurturing staff, with the right attitude and with exemplary code of ethics are employed, then there will be that strong sense of duty and commitment to the children. They will understand and embrace their role in creating a better society starting in the classroom.
- Leadership and management of the schools are of paramount importance. Our schools must be led by qualified, innovative and student-centered administrators.
- There should be ongoing monitoring of the delivery and assessment of the curriculum so that students are not 'shortchanged' and their only recourse is in attending 'lessons'.
- At the Primary and Secondary level, staff shortages and high enrolment in cramped classrooms create burnout in teachers and underperformance among students. We recommend that all schools must be suitably and adequately built or repaired and staffed.
- Vacancies must be filled immediately and all arms of the Ministry of Education must operate in a timely and efficient manner.
- Likewise, there must be mechanisms in place to promptly deal with the incompetent and inefficient staff.
- Staff assessment and appraisal as well as mandatory licensing of teachers are critical in ensuring that our students and our country are taught by the most qualified and competent.

- The government must continue with the professional development of administrators and teachers if we are to keep abreast of current research and practice in education. We must make the change if we want a progressive Education System.
- Necessary legal changes must be addressed in the Education Act to bring the legislation to meet the needs of the current generations.
- If we want to see a sustainable and prosperous Trinidad and Tobago, out of necessity, we must change the way we educate our children.



<https://www.guardian.co.tt/news/parents-children-stage-school-protest-in-claxton-bay-6.2.1543014.d3f80ee839>

Health



Health is an important component of learning in children. All aspects of children's health and development work together to form their overall wellbeing. Healthy children lead to a healthy society and a prosperous country.

Every effort must be made to ensure that all children receive the medical care that they need. The Ministry of Health and healthcare professionals and policy makers must be proactive and implement preventative measures and treatment of chronic diseases among children. Children deserve access to prompt medical treatment. This may call for a strengthening of the existing systems at the clinics and hospitals.

We recommend the return of visits by nurses and health officials to the schools on a routine basis to diagnose and administer support for the children. The ideal scenario would be to have a nurse at all schools.

Good planning should ensure that there are doctors and nurses and other medical staff available at the local health centres and hospitals to treat children.

Each child must be given an opportunity to live and live well.

Let us preserve the wellbeing of our children; our future leaders.

Sports and Physical Activities...



James Castagne-Hay

https://trinidadexpress.com/sports/yss/james-castagne-hay/article_3fc44650-2172-11ee-ba04-d32bc751aef7.html

Fatima College: As a triathlete, Hay explains, training can vary from focused sessions on technique and aerobic work to challenging brick sessions that combine cycling, running, and swimming. Trinidad Express, June 2023.

Organised and well-structured sports and ongoing physical activities promote enormous benefits to young people:

- ✓ Many students who take an active role in sports do better academically.
- ✓ Sports teach valuable lessons in teamwork and problem-solving skills
- ✓ It promotes physical and mental health.
- ✓ It boosts self-esteem and self-confidence and love of oneself.
- ✓ Builds the emotional well-being of the young student.

We are fully aware that many sporting initiatives have been promoted by the Government and the Ministry of Education, however, there must be an assessment and evaluation of these projects in the schools. For example, many of the secondary schools were recipients of sporting facilities yet many of the schools lack the physical facilities and adequate staffing to execute this program.

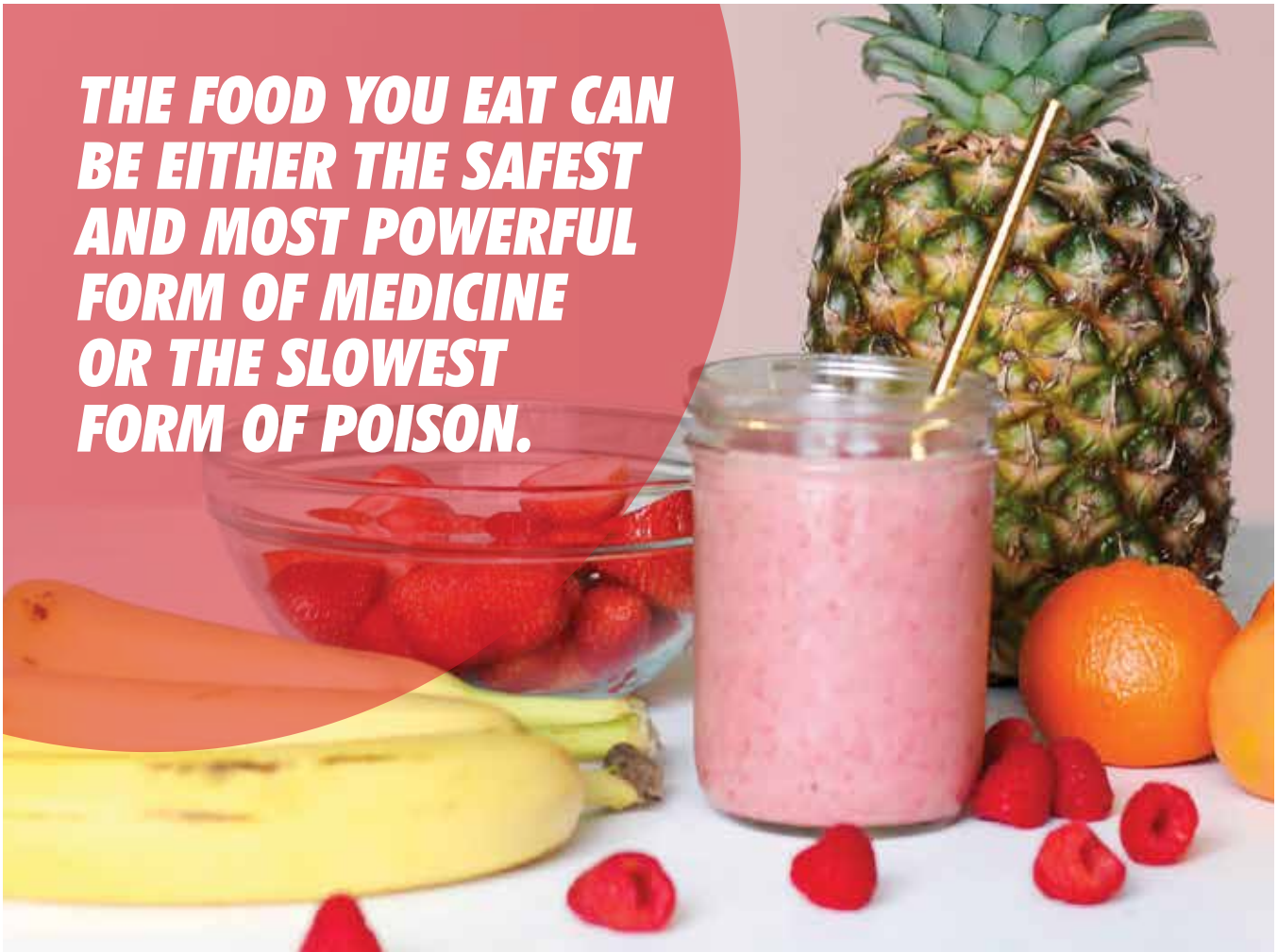
We recommend that all schools pursue sports, music, drama and extracurricular activities making it mandatory for graduating from primary and secondary school.

Our sports heroes must be encouraged to do their part and tutors should be contracted by the Ministry of Education to teach in all the following areas:

Cricket, Football, Netball, Hockey, Lawn tennis, Archery, Swimming, Drama, Music, Steelpan, Tassa, Drumming, Sitar, Violin, Flute, Dancing, Harmonium, Guitar...

Nutrition

**THE FOOD YOU EAT CAN
BE EITHER THE SAFEST
AND MOST POWERFUL
FORM OF MEDICINE
OR THE SLOWEST
FORM OF POISON.**



There are volumes of research on proper nutrition for a growing child. The provision of simple well-balanced, nutritious meals with less sugary drinks should be mandated.

We recommend a return of fruits and cereal for breakfast and a variety of simple and tasty meals be provided.

We also strongly suggest a rotation of caterers so that benchmarks of high quality are maintained and the children are not short-changed.

Children who need the meals should have it based on their means and backgrounds. Those in dire need should be given first preference and reference should be made to the socio-metric data to determine those who qualify.

The school meals provided by the School Dietary Services are for the children and proper distribution and feedback are necessary.

Transport



<https://www.zorce.com/2014Z3/index.php/departments/departments/zorcerazzi/auto-news/727-ansa-motors-ngc-cng-and-school-transport-association-join-forces>

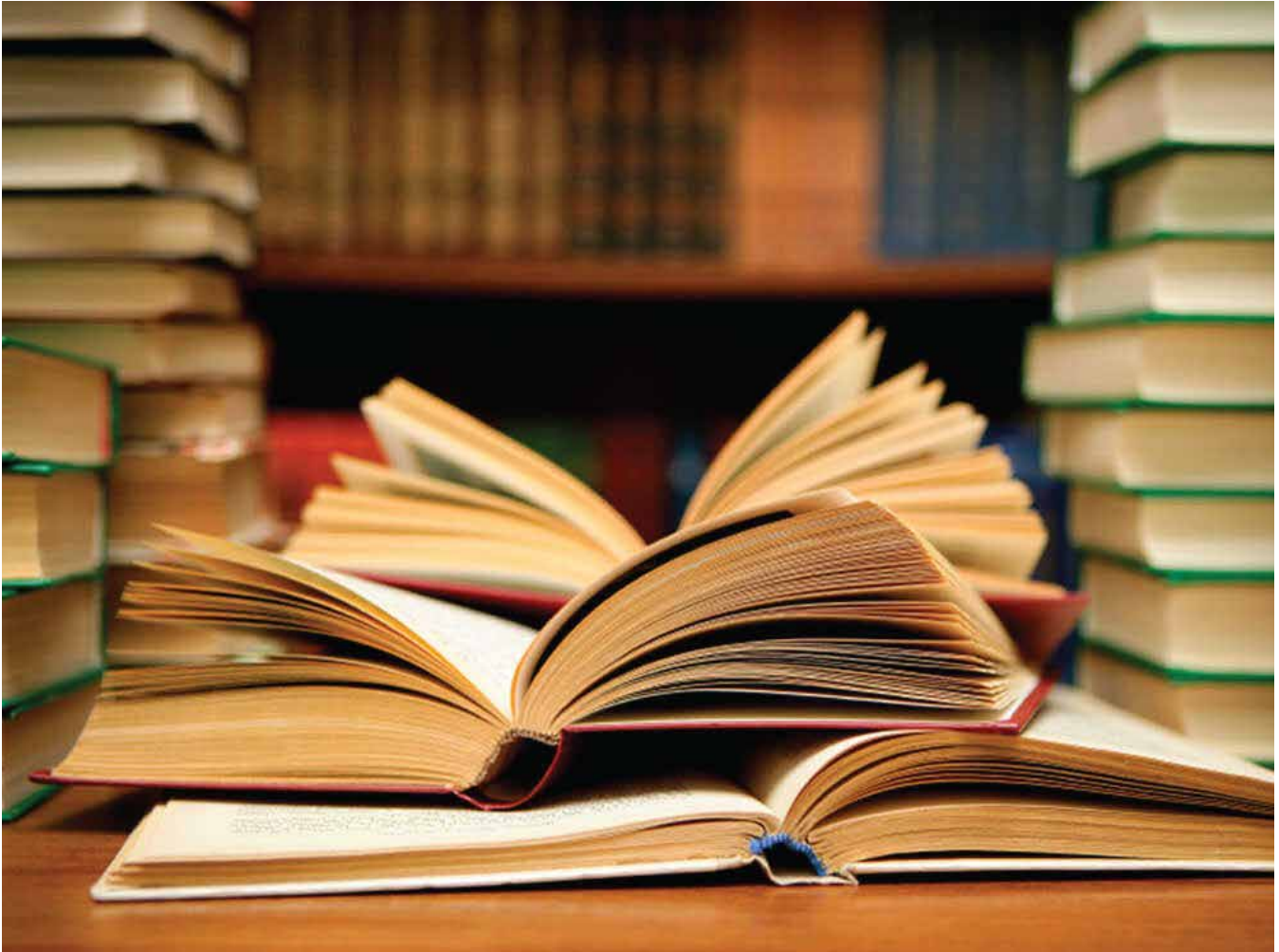
Education must always be a priority for a nation and our students should be provided with free transportation to and from school on a daily basis.

This service must be monitored and supervised by officials of the Ministry of Education and from the Ministry of Transport. Far too often, drivers are not supervised and create their own rules.

There must be clear and enforced policy guidelines to ensure that the students are monitored and safe in the buses. There is an urgent need to regularize the school transport system.

To ensure a reliable service, payments to drivers must be made on time by the Government.

Textbook Rental System



Several years ago, the Ministry of Education introduced 'The Textbook Rental System' at the secondary schools. This was a fantastic initiative where all students were afforded the opportunity to be provided with standardized textbooks across all schools from Forms 1 to 6.

Parents were very relieved to not having to spend exorbitant sums of money on textbooks and this provided access to free education to ALL students.

For several reasons, this program ran into stumbling blocks with many schools abandoning the system. However, many schools continue to manage this

system efficiently and to this date, the books under 'Textbook Rental System', are still being recycled to the students on a yearly basis.

The Ministry of Education must intervene, assess the status of this programme at the schools, look at the best practices at the institutions which have managed the system efficiently and adopt these best practices across the nation's schools.

The book voucher is another option to re-introduce.

This issue of Textbook standardization, availability, affordability and usage in schools for our children is a critical one and warrants immediate intervention.

Security at Schools



Trinidad and Tobago Newspaper

Security of schools should be compulsory to ensure not only safety but to ensure law and order among the children.

All schools should provide basic amenities for security and safety officers and there must be checks and balances to ensure that security is a priority for all.

Tough rules with penalties should be made and enforced in a fair and transparent manner.

Schools in districts which are 'hot spots' for crime must be given more attention with regular police patrols.

The security of our children at school, at home and on the streets is paramount.

To restore law and order in our country, everyone must play a part, and this could only be achieved if there is confidence in the legal and law enforcement systems.

Final Words



To ensure that our society evolves and that our young people are given every opportunity to succeed as a global citizen, we urge the authorities to take a definitive stand and make the necessary changes beginning with good parenting initiatives and a holistic approach to educating and empowering our nation's children.



**EDUCATION IS THE MOST
POWERFUL WEAPON, WHICH
YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE
THE WORLD.**

NELSON MANDELA

About the Authors

Meet the team of long-standing friends, each committed to the welfare of our nation's children and our beloved country of Trinidad and Tobago and who felt compelled to share this simple, powerful and relatable message.

Donna Ali

Administrative Manager;

Five - year Islamic Alima Course in Islamic Theology; President of Islamic home for children;

Vice President, ASJA Girls' College, San Fernando Alumni Assoc.,

Treasurer of Inter club of TT (17 Organisations)

PP of National Muslim Women's Organisation TT

Attended many seminars locally and abroad

Committed Voluntary worker

Swalaha Baksh Ali

Teachers' Diploma

Educator for over 45 years

Retired Teacher - Primary and Junior Secondary schools

Past President of the Society of Severe and Inherited and Blood Disorders.

Secretary of Hillview PTA (1990's)

Executive member of National Muslim Women's Organisation TT

Attended many seminars locally and abroad

Committed Voluntary worker

Camille Hosein

MEd, Teachers' Certificate

Retired Principal of San Fernando TML Primary School

Recipient of Scouting- Medal of Merit, Service in the sphere of Scouting.

Recipient of National Award - Public Service Medal of Merit 2018

Attended many seminars locally

Committed Voluntary worker

Feroza (Rose) Mohammed

Grade 2 Cambridge Exam; Diploma in Management; Master of Business Administration Brunel University London; Government Six weeks Caribbean Organization and Management Course

Public servant - Retired Senior Organisation and Management Officer, Ministry of Finance

Represented O&M on the Town and Country Planning Board under chairman Ken Snags and served under the Manning Administration as a member of the Prime Minister's Crime committee, under chairman Ken Gordon

Company Director- RT Mohammed Chartered Accountants; Imjin Security Services Co. Ltd.; Ojeer's Hardware Ltd. Tunapuna.

Author - Published book "Speak Out";

A private family book of 430 pages, "From Indentured Labourers to Present Time"

Dissertation: Marketing of the Steelpan and Steelpan music; Islamic Prayer Book in English; and many brochures and delivered papers

Founder and Charter President of four NGOs:

Maingot Road Tunapuna, Women's Group. (A village organisation)(National)

Founding President of The Inner Wheel Club of St. Augustine, wives of Rotarians. (International)

Co-Founder of the Indian Women's Group of Trinidad and Tobago, with Her Excellency Thelma Kumar, wife of former Indian High Commissioner, His Excellency Shiv Kumar. (National);

Founding president of The National Muslim Women's Organisation of TT. (National)

Member of thirteen other local charitable Organisations, (17 in all) Muslims, Hindus, and Christians.

Awards for Community Work:

National Award -The Hummingbird Medal Gold (2006)

Hilton Hotel Icon's Award: Port of Spain

City Council POS Award:

Paul Harris Award from the San Fernando West Rotary Club for community work

St. Augustine Rotary Club: Award for establishing the Inner Wheel Club of St. Augustine

The Mahant Ramdass Award from the Eldorado Shiv Mandir, Maha Sabha

The United Nations Award as an Agent of Change in the Commonwealth

Dedication of the NMWOTT, tenth anniversary brochure was made to Rose for International Women's Day 2015,

AFETT Women of Influence-Social Entrepreneur Award

Recognized by the Family Planning Association as one of the most influential women in Trinidad and Tobago

One of the five women selected in 2022 as persons of knowledge, to be represented in discussions on the power of Fourscore and Over

Voluntary social worker for some sixty years

Attended many seminars locally and abroad and is a committed voluntary worker.

Rose is not only an ardent worker for the poor and needy but is totally involved in all aspects of religious life and education

Zenobia Mohammed

Company Director

Retired teacher TML Primary school, San Fernando

President of National Muslim Women's Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago

Vice President of Naparima Girls' High school Alumnae Association

Vice President of San Fernando Muslim Women's Association

Representative of the Interclub of Trinidad and Tobago

Attended many seminars locally and abroad

Committed voluntary worker for the last 15 years

Yasmin Rahaman-Singh

MBA, MEd, Dip. Ed Tech, Dip. In Ed, BSc -Economics

Event Planner

Retired Principal-ASJA Girls' College, San Fernando 2023

National Award Public Service and Education Order of Merit Silver 2023

Honorary Member- ASJA Girls' College San Fernando Alumni Association

Member of the Urbanization Committee- ASJA Girls' College, San Fernando

Member of the National Muslim Women's Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago

Textbook Reviewer and Content Developer

Lead Editor- "A Heartfelt Conversation with Recommendations to Transform Trinidad and Tobago and make it a better place for all our nation's children."

Educator - Transformational Leader-Agent of Change

Certified LIFE Coach, Certified Academic Coach

Attended many seminars locally and abroad

Committed voluntary worker for the last 30 years

Honourable Mention:

Brenda Gopeesingh

Company Director

Founding member of the HWO in 1987

Joined CAFRA in 1988HWO Joined the Network of NGO's in1994

In 2011 was one of 18 women who were Identified as Agents of Change on Commonwealth Day

Envoy to the Caribbean by the PM, KPB along with Hazel Brown on International Women's Day

In 2011 awarded the Inaugural Medal for Women in Development at the Independence Award

Ceremony along with Hazel Brown and Diana Mahabir

Appointed as a member of the Child Protection Task Force by KBM

Attended 4 sessions of the Commission of the Status of Women which influenced my commitment to the cause of advancing the status of women.

Published pamphlets on behalf of HWOTT

Attended many seminar locally and abroad

Committed Voluntary Worker

Rabbia Khan

B.A. Dip. Ed.

Company Director; In-Corr-Tech Ltd

Retired Ag. Vice Principal St Joseph's Convent San Fernando

Past President of Soroptimist International San Fernando; Executive member Soroptimist International Esperance

Prevention Team member of the Working Group National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons- Ministry of National Security

Past President of The Interclub of T&T – Women working Together (19 clubs)
Executive member National Muslim women's Organisation TT.
Attended many seminars locally and abroad
Committed and compassionate voluntary worker for the last 30 years.

Soraya Khan

Distinguished Banking Career
Company Director of Three companies.
P.P of the National Muslim Women's Organisation TT.
P.P. Indian Women's Group of TT:
President Interclub TT. (17 clubs)
Attended many seminars locally and abroad
Committed voluntary worker

Shihan Marva John-Logan

Recipient of the Hummingbird Medal Gold
Was selected as the most outstanding Woman in 2023 by The InterClub of Trinidad and Tobago
Social Worker and Activist, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs
Ryu Dan Dojo Empowerment Foundation
Member of the National Muslim Women's Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago
Attended many seminars locally and abroad
Committed voluntary worker

Dr. Indrani Rampersad PhD,

Founder and first president of the Hindu Women's Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago.
Bachelor's degree (Banaras Hindu University)
Masters and PhD degree in Communication and Journalism (University of Pune, India) Presently studying for a master's degree in Hindu Studies at the Banaras Hindu University (the first course of its kind in India)
Senior Research Fellow in Ram Lila/Ramdilla Studies at the University of Trinidad and Tobago (2007 to 2012)
National Award Gold in the category of Women in Development (2013)
Independent scholar, journalist, educator, women's activist, and Trinidad and Tobago's first female Hindu priest/pandita
Interest in the indentured Ramayan traditions, Ram Lila/Ramdilla, Indian and Hindu Culture, social justice, gender, and identity
She has published in scholarly journals and encyclopedias
Attended many seminars locally and abroad
Committed voluntary worker

Kamla Tewari

Post Graduate Diploma in HR Management UWI-IOB

Children's House. State College, PA Montessori Preschool

Teaching B. A, Foreign Languages, University of Toronto, Scarborough College, Ont. Canada

President of the Hindu Women's group TT. 2003-2008 and from 2019-2024

Judge Pichakaree Competition – the Hindu Prachaar Kendra

2008 Delegate – UNFPA Global Forum on Strengthening Partnerships with Faith Based Organisations to protect; support human rights with focus Women; Girls, Istanbul Turkey

2010 UNFPA\CARICOM Meeting “Promoting Healthy Lifestyles among out of School Youths through Life Skills based Health;

Family Education, Turkeyen, Guyana 2006-2010 Religions for Peace- Member of the coordinating Committee of Women of Faith for Latin America; the Caribbean

1996-2018 President - Secondary Schools Sanskritik Sangam 1995 President - French Teachers' Association of T&T Author-Revision Exercises for CXC French (Charran's)

1972 VP Scarborough College International Students' Assoc., Univ. of Toronto

Attended many seminars locally and abroad

Committed voluntary worker

Transforming Trinidad and Tobago Together: A Journey Accessible to All

Dear Reader,

In your hands lies not just a book, but a beacon of hope and a call to action for a brighter Trinidad and Tobago. This publication marks a pivotal step towards empowering every citizen to be an agent of positive change in our nation.

We understand the power of collective action and the importance of making transformative ideas accessible to all. That's why we are taking an unprecedented step: alongside this hard copy, we've made the entire content of the book available for free download. This is our commitment to inclusivity and our belief in the power of shared knowledge.

As a holder of this book, you carry more than just pages of text; you bear a responsibility – a noble one – to extend this wave of change. We urge you to share this book with your community, your co-workers, your family, and anyone in your life who dreams of a better Trinidad and Tobago. Pass on the torch of transformation by guiding them to the downloadable version of this book.

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In making this content easily accessible, we aim to ignite a nationwide movement of informed, engaged, and proactive citizens. Your role in this journey is crucial. By sharing this book, you're not just spreading information; you're nurturing a community of change-makers.

Let us unite in our quest to shape a prosperous future for our nation. Together, we can turn the blueprint laid out in these pages into a reality for Trinidad and Tobago.

Embrace your role in this transformative journey. Share the knowledge, spread the word, and let's build the future we all envision.

Thank you and God's Blessings

Team of Twelve Friends

*The Faces of our Nation's children...
and the rest of the Caribbean...*



San Fernando TML Primary School



St Andrew's Private School, Maraval



ASJA Girls' College, San Fernando



Scarborough Methodist Primary School, Tobago

