

Jamaican Students Gain Work Experience With Diaspora-Owned Companies

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Lead, Jamaica Diaspora Agriculture and Technology Task Forces, Kimone Gooden with Adjunct Professor, Seminole State College, Dwight Elliot (left), and Chief Information Officer, GraceKennedy, Simon Roberts, at the recently held Jamaica 55 Diaspora Conference

Twelve software engineering students are receiving practical job experience by working with international companies over the summer.

This is under the 'Calico Open Source Software Development Project,' which is being undertaken by the Diaspora Technology Task Force in the United States in partnership with the Palisadoes Foundation.

Task force member Kimone Gooden told the JIS News that the initiative, introduced in 2016, pairs students in Jamaica with a Diaspora mentor. Seven students benefited during the first year.

She said that the body works with the University of the West Indies (UWI) Computing Society to select students each summer and gives them a stipend to work on an open-source software development project.

Gooden noted that the students stay in Jamaica while they work on these projects.

"The Diaspora Technology Task Force is trying to emphasise that there is no need to try to go through migration and get a visa as you have the resources here in Jamaica to support clients overseas," she said.

Gooden said that the project was inspired by a member of the task force, who studied computing at the UWI, and recognised the need for technology graduates to have practical experience for the global market.

"When they go to school and learn the coding, we realise they do not have any experience to match that," she pointed out, noting that the task force member "understood what it was to go overseas without that experience".

Applications for the project open around March of each year to university students, and selection takes place in May and June.

- JIS
