



Schools from rural Jamaica dominated the top spots in the Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan Essay Competition, when the winners were announced on Wednesday (January 30) at the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

The competition, which was staged islandwide in October, saw students in different age group categories expressing how Jamaica can achieve its vision of “being the place to live, grow, raise families and do business” by 2030, and examining the benefits of the country having such a plan.

Education Minister, the Hon. Rev. Ronald Thwaites, who was guest speaker at the award ceremony held at the PIOJ’s Oxford Road offices, said the trend of rural winners “is good”.

“Good can come out of the Nazareth of rural Jamaica. It is vitally important that we lift up our schools, hold our parents and teachers accountable and build a whole culture of the joy of education and the strength that can come from it,” he stated.

Commending the PIOJ on staging the essay competition, he pointed out that the National Development Plan recognises very early, the importance of having an educated population.

The Minister posited that Jamaica must set out to be a knowledge economy.

“It is when Jamaica says to ourselves, as we have set out in Vision 2030, (that) we are going to become the knowledge economy of the Caribbean, knowledge economy of the Americas, that we are going to see prosperity really come our way,” he argued.

Ten-year old Kadejah Stanley of Inverness Primary in St. Ann took first place in Category One

of the competition for students 10 to 14 years old. She wrote on the topic: 'How Can I Contribute To Making Jamaica The Place of Choice to Live, Work, Raise Families, and Do Business by the Year 2030'.

An elated Kadejah said writing the essay was "a lot of hard work" and thanked her parents, teacher and principal for assisting her.

Second place went to 11-year old Aliyah Wright of Pratville Primary and Infant School in Manchester, while 14-year old Mikail Clarke of Cornwall College in St. James placed third.

In Category Two, for students 15 to 19 years, 15-year old Victoria Bedward of William Knibb Memorial High School in Trelawny took top honours for her essay on the topic: 'What are the Benefits of the Country having a Long-Term Plan such as Vision 2030 Jamaica?'

Second place went to Janice Alexander of Knox College in Clarendon, while Tajay Platt of Cornwall College placed third.

The students received prizes of Tablet Computers, Kindle Fire and Vision 2030 memorabilia. The winning schools also collected the first place trophies.

The essay competition formed part of the Vision 2030 Secretariat's efforts to heighten awareness, knowledge and understanding, particularly among youngsters, of the country's first long-term National Development Plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica.