



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**KICKSTARTING THE DIA YOUTH INNOVATION LAB
IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

The Youth Innovation Lab in Trinidad will impact 200 young people in 2021, providing state-of-the-art innovation and technology training, access to collaboration spaces and more, promoting STEM education and entrepreneurship.

Port Of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago and Washington, DC. June 8, 2021 – The Trust for the Americas, in partnership with the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) and Citi Foundation, hosted a virtual event to announce and promote the new Trinidad & Tobago DIA Lab. With this DIA Lab, The Trust for the Americas implements activities to promote development for the first time in this Caribbean country. Young innovators and disruptive entrepreneurs will create low-cost, high-impact, high-quality innovation solutions that generate affordable access and livelihood opportunities for their communities on a long-term sustainable basis.

The following authorities participated in the virtual event hosted by CARIRI and Citi Trinidad and Tobago ([link](#)): The Honorable Minister Foster Cummings - Ministry of Youth Development and National Service, Mrs. Patricia De Leon Henry - National Director, National Social Development Programme, Mr. Renzo Angeles - Vice President and Cash Market Head Trinidad and Tobago in Citi Foundation, Mrs. Danielle Rampersad - Vice President and General Counsel in Citi Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Mitchell De Silva - Trinidad and Tobago Citi Country Officer, Mr. Dwayne Gutzmer - Chief Executive Officer in the Institute of Law & Economics Jamaica, Ms. Shanae Owen Project Officer in the Institute of Law & Economics Jamaica, Ms. Marina Piper - OAS Country Officer, representatives from The Trust for the Americas, CARIRI, Citi Foundation, and The Institute of Law & Economics.

According to the Inter-American Development Bank, approximately one in five youth between the ages of 15 to 24 in the Caribbean are not in school nor part of the workforce. This project will trigger empowerment and innovation among Caribbean youth by giving them digital and entrepreneurial skills, crucial elements for economic growth.

CARIRI's Human Resource Manager, Ms. Denise Ferguson declared: "Building capacity in Trinidad and Tobago has always been at the forefront of CARIRI's mandate. This new initiative will allow us to expand our scope into an area that allows at-risk youth to become entrepreneurs, *ideators*, and innovators".

Mitch De Silva, Trinidad & Tobago Citi Country Officer, followed the incredible virtual tour and presentation and during his speech, declared: "We are proud to be part of the development of strong sustainable communities and Citi Trinidad & Tobago is pleased to be part of Citi Foundation's Pathways to Progress global initiative to prepare young people with the career readiness tools and opportunities needed to thrive in today's economy. We believe this will help them build an entrepreneurial mindset and acquire leadership skills which will ultimately benefit their families, communities and the country."

In 2016, Citi Foundation and The Trust launched the DIA Urban Labs for Youth Innovation in Jamaica. From 2016 to 2020, over 1,350 youth received training and access to the state-of-the-art technology to solve



challenges in their communities. In that context, The Institute of Law & Economics shared experiences and lessons learned from the DIA Lab in Jamaica.

Linda Eddleman, CEO of The Trust for the Americas, mentioned that “this is a very important day at The Trust because we are launching the first program in Trinidad and Tobago in our 20-year history. Working with CARIRI and with the support of Citi Foundation and the Organization of American States, we know that this project will help change the lives of many young people, and in turn positively impact their communities. Specifically, we seek to provide young entrepreneurs with state-of-the-art technology training, collaboration spaces, specialized curricula, mentorship, and financial resources for their social and economic ventures.”

Godiva Golding, a former participant of the DIA Urban Lab in Jamaica, shared her success story and talked about how the DIA Lab in Jamaica impacted her life positively and that of his community. Ms. Godiva Golding mentioned: “Just this sort of support that they provided in terms of pitching, the mentorship, the connections that have been built, have really helped us to move us from a space of simply existing and having an idea to constantly bringing it to reality.”

At the end of the event, Rodrigo Iriani, Senior Program Manager, DIA, and CARIRI’s Senior Business Development Officer, Laura Da’Breau, made the official launch of the Youth Innovation Lab. Rodrigo Iriani concluded: "DIA is about empowering citizens for social change through collective intelligence. I encourage all of you today to participate: public officials, youth, academic institutions, international agencies; a multi-stakeholder approach is key for success. This is about building ecosystem to achieve transformation."

The Trinidad & Tobago DIA Lab will improve the lives of Trinidadian youth, allowing them to learn highly-demanded technological skills and develop disruptive solutions that would benefit their communities. During the event, the audience visited the Lab facilities through a virtual tour that highlighted the benefits technology provides to empower young people. More information about the lab will be posted in our [website](#) and social media platforms of [@trust4americas](#)



Following page includes extra info about Trust for the Americas and Media annexes -----



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About The Trust for the Americas:

The Trust for the Americas is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization affiliated with the Organization of American States (OAS). It was established in 1997 to promote public and private sector participation in social and economic development projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. Our initiatives, implemented through local partner organizations, seek to improve access to economic opportunities as well as to foster innovation in vulnerable communities in the hemisphere. To this end, The Trust also promotes social inclusion and good governance. The Trust has offices in Washington, D.C., Colombia, and Canada.

More information: www.trustfortheamericas.org

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Annexes for Media:

Use this logo of the DIA Lab in all communications:



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