

**PRESS RELEASE
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(3 pgs)

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Girls Can Do It Too!



Speakers from Left: J.Wilkins, R.Fraser, C. Thomas, J.Syms, G.Charles-Harris



Cross-section of speakers and students



Front from left: A.Webster, Y.Pinder; R. Fraser;
On stage: Bishop's Centenary College- Mobile App Competitors

Over 130 girls of the Bishop's Centenary College were introduced to the limitless possibilities for women in ICTs to commemorate International Girls in ICT Day. The initiative is backed by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) member states to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in the burgeoning field of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The theme for 2015 was: **"Girls and Women and Innovation"**.

The event was hosted by CANTO and Soroptimist International of Port of Spain on the 23rd of April, 2015 and included a forum, mini exhibition and mobile application competition.

The interactive forum featured dynamic presenters from the private and public sector. Presenters provided students with an overview of their journey to their respective ICT careers. Reference was also made to regional and other international women who have made significant achievements in ICTs. Students got the opportunity to explore the different facets of ICT including potential careers in an area that is seemingly dominated by men. Some of the key points from the proceedings of the workshop highlighted by the presenters were:

- Senior positions in jobs in ICT sector for women are attainable and feasible
- ICT is not only about technology but access to it
- Women in senior positions can generate more revenue to the company

- Education is key to success in the ICT sector
- Empowered girls of today can be the forerunners in the ICT sector tomorrow
- Self-employment in ICT is also an option

Mrs. Teresa Wankin, Operations Manager of CANTO was the M.C. of the event. Opening remarks were delivered by: Mrs. Yvonne Pinder, Principal of Bishop's Centenary College; Mr. Julian Wilkins, Chairman of CANTO; Ms. Glenda Charles-Harris, Executive Member of Soroptimist International of Port of Spain; Ms. Jacqueline Syms, Chair of iGovTT; Mr. Cleveland Thomas, Area Representative, ITU Area Office for the Caribbean; Ms. Regenie Fräser, Secretary General of CANTO.

The women in ICT segment included; Mrs. Kelly-Ann Phillips, Director, The Community HUB Corporation; Ms. Tramaine Gumaia Project Coordinator of the ICT-IDB Project, CARIRI; Ms. Arti Ramdhanie Developer for the IDB Project, CARIRI; Ms. Louella-Anne Edwards, Group Technology Manager, CCN; Ms. Katyann Marshall, Lecturer- COSTAATT.

The featured speaker of the event was the dynamic entrepreneur, 22 year old Ms. Afiya Hopson. Ms Hopson is the CEO and owner of *Hair? Braid It!* salon. She holds a BSc in Industrial Engineering and is one of the top hair dressers in Trinidad & Tobago. She utilizes social media and her website to promote, innovate and leverage her clients in a competitive environment. In her presentation, Ms. Hopson advised the students to reach for the stars, work hard and reminded them that nothing good comes easy.

The jubilant students got an opportunity to explore ICT products and services exhibited by a few of the sponsors. Students also participated in numerous questions and answers segments by the presenters and were rewarded with tokens for their contributions.

In the competition segment, students were asked to create an innovative mobile application that would benefit women and/or girls in ICTs. The students were excited and eager to present their innovative mobile application ideas and 11 entries were submitted. It was a tough job for the judges however, Ms Maya Hamlet with her mobile application idea called '*Professions*' emerged as the winner. '*Professions*' is a game application which allows girls to explore the different careers in ICTs. Ms Hamlet won a cash prize of TT\$1000 and a tablet. Team Odeisha Bethel and Kaitlin Assing came in second place and won a tablet plus TT\$700; their mobile application was aptly named '*Women and girls in ICT*'. In third place was Shyann Holder who won TT\$300 and a CANTO power bank with her game application idea '*Superior Women*'. Special mention was made of Karissa Ali and Virginia Tonguson who impressed the judges with their app idea called '*Info-novation*'.

The students were all encouraged to participate in the CANTO 9th WTISD Video Competition:- deadline: - May 1st, 2015 and the CANTO/ i-Create e-Content Competition, deadline: - 19th June, 2015.

The *Women and Girls in ICT Forum, Exhibition and Mobile Application Competition* were made possible by the following partners & sponsors: Soroptimist International of Port of Spain, Telecommunications



Authority of Trinidad & Tobago (TATT), The Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI), iGovTT, COSTAATT and the Community HUB Corporation.

For more information visit the following websites:

CANTO: www.canto.org

Girls in ICT: <http://girlsiniict.org/>

Soroptimist International of Port of Spain: <http://www.soroptimist-tt.org/site/>

Event Photos: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.944743285535992.1073741855.122793827730946&type=1>

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CANTO is recognized as the leading trade association of the ICT sector for shaping information and communication in the Caribbean. Founded in 1985 as a non-profit association of 8 telephone operating companies, CANTO has now grown to over 125 members in more than 35 countries. A Board of Directors appointed by the membership directs policy of the Association. This strategy is executed by the staff of a permanent Secretariat based in Trinidad and Tobago.