



PRESS RELEASE

Washington DC, February 12, 2009

The Trust for the Americas, a nonprofit affiliate of the Organization of American States, invites members of the public and media to the virtual launch of the POETA Youth Web Portal - www.poetayouth.org - at 10 am EST on February 16th 2009.

This portal is made possible through the generous contribution of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada to the youth training program, Partnership in Opportunities for Employment through Technology in the Americas (POETA) in the Eastern Caribbean. The portal is a key component of a regional initiative designed to promote the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to support knowledge sharing among Caribbean youth; integrate life skills training with ICT skills training, and raise awareness among policymakers of the critical role ICTs play in development.

POETA Youth Web Portal: Virtual Launch

The POETA Youth Web Portal will serve as an important tool for interactive communication and education among young people in the Eastern Caribbean and beyond. The portal will facilitate communication among youth in the region, feature innovative online civic education training and will enable youth to have their voices heard by decision makers and stakeholders. The launch signals the availability of this portal for use by POETA Youth participants, young people in the region and other organizations wishing to participate in this innovative tool. In addition, private sector companies are invited to highlight social programs, internships, and job openings on the portal. The Trust invites all interested youth, companies, NGOs and the general public to use the portal.

POETA Youth Online Forum: *How Can Technology Improve My Life*

On March 2nd, 2009, The Trust for the Americas will facilitate the first of several online youth forums on the POETA Youth Web Portal. The forum topic, "***How Can Technology Improve My Life,***" will provide participants with an opportunity to discuss the impact of technology on their lives and how it can serve as a tool in their positive development. The Trust for the Americas will publish a report based on the results of each youth forum.

For more information about the POETA Youth Web Portal or how you can contribute to the website, please contact:

Asha Williams

Email: awilliams@oas.org

Phone: 1-202-458-3675

Adam Siegel

Email: asiegel@oas.org

Phone: 1-246-426-1565

ABOUT THE TRUST FOR THE AMERICAS

The Trust for the Americas promotes private and public sector participation in projects that reflect the main goals of the OAS in the areas of *Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D)* and *Transparency and Governance, Labor Rights Compliance and Peace and Reconciliation*.

Partnership in Opportunities for Employment through Technology in the Americas, **POETA**, the Trust's ICT initiative, provides marginalized populations with job-ready information and communication technology (ICT) skills. POETA program graduates acquire ICT skills in a range of employable disciplines to improve their employability and empowerment. POETA's success in Latin America enabled the Trust to leverage support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), CISCO Systems Inc, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Microsoft to expand POETA to Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines. POETA targets at-risk youth in the Eastern Caribbean, providing them with training in ICTs, job readiness and civic education. Approximately 600 youth between the ages of 16-30 have graduated the POETA program in the Eastern Caribbean. POETA provides ICT and other training to vulnerable communities through 60 centers in 18 countries in the Americas.