



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Digital Transformation

MEDIA RELEASE

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Three Community ICT Access Centres open in September

Maitagual, Maraval, and Tacarigua are the three latest communities to benefit from state-of-the-art ICT Access Centres, which have been formally opened this month. These are located inside three newly constructed Community Centres, and are part of the ongoing partnership between the Ministry of Sport and Community Development and the Ministry of Digital Transformation.

The Maitagual Community Centre, located in Petit Bourg, San Juan, was opened on Wednesday September 14, 2022. The Tacarigua and Maraval Community Centres are set to be opened this week, on Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29, September respectively.

These Centres comprise a total of six (6) brand new Access Centres which have been opened by the Ministry of Digital Transformation between May and September, 2022, and a total of twelve (12) Centres now available across Trinidad.

Each ICT Access Centre features Hubs where visitors may '*Connect and Create*' and explore training opportunities which encourage them to '*Educate and Innovate*'. The facilities, equipped with desktop computers, laptops and printing facilities, will provide underserved or ICT-excluded communities with internet access, free printing services, access to government services, information, and online educational training resources which allow the residents to continue their education and build professional skills and competencies.

The Access Centres are also staffed with residents employed from within the communities or surrounding districts. They can offer training and support to customers who may not be familiar with or confident using computer devices or going online.

Speaking at the Opening Ceremony of the Maitagual community Centre on September 14, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Digital Transformation, Richard Madray, said the ICT Access Centres are about more than computer and Wi-Fi access. "I firmly believe that this will add significant value to the residents of Maitagual and environs, and reinforce the good work of local organisations. Your ICT Access Centre can also serve as a gateway to raise awareness of Maitagual in the wider national community and beyond."

The Maitagual Community Centre was opened by the Minister of Sport and Community Development, the Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe, and Minister of Health and MP for St. Joseph, Dr. the Honourable Terrance Deyalsingh. The upcoming commissioning of Tacarigua and Maraval will also be attended by the MPs and Community Council representatives of the respective communities.

The opening of ICT Access Centres across Trinidad and Tobago is in keeping with the Ministry's promise to ensure that all communities within Trinidad and Tobago can participate in a Digital Society, Digital Economy and Digital Government. In bridging the digital divide, the Minister of Digital Transformation, Senator the Honourable Hassel Bacchus has pledged that access will not merely mean coverage and access to broadband as a public good, but that no one is left behind.

Digital Literacy training, through partnerships with the Adult Literacy Tutors Association (ALTA) Online Programme, and the YTEPP Limited, will also be conducted at the Access Centres, to ensure persons are confident in using digital technology. Other training partnerships with the Microsoft Philanthropic Group and other organisations are also scheduled to come on stream before end of year.

The Ministry has committed that by the end of the year, fifty (50) ICT Access Centres, physical and/or virtual, will be operational, under construction, and/or approved for construction.

For the live stream of the Opening Ceremonies of the new Access Centres in Tacarigua and Maraval on September 28 and 29, and information on all Access Centres, visit mdt.gov.tt.

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