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NCTI LAUNCHES BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME TO EQUIP YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS WITH DIGITAL SKILLS

The National Centre for Technological Innovation (NCTI) has launched its Business and Technology Leadership Programme, bringing together more than 100 young entrepreneurs, aspiring business owners, and students for an intensive three-week training initiative aimed at strengthening leadership, entrepreneurship, and digital skills.

The programme officially opened on Thursday, July 9, 2026, at the Frenches House Conference Room in Kingstown. It forms part of NCTI's ongoing efforts to support the growth of startups and small businesses by combining entrepreneurship with practical information and communications technology (ICT) training and mentorship.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Chief Executive Officer of the National Centre for Technological Innovation, Petrus Gumbs, said the NCTI Elevate Programme is designed to empower entrepreneurs and young people with practical, industry-relevant skills in artificial intelligence, social media advertising, Advanced Microsoft Excel, and QuickBooks certification.

Gumbs revealed that the programme has attracted 112 participants and provides training valued at approximately EC\$1,500 at no cost to attendees. He encouraged participants to focus on acquiring valuable skills rather than seeking quick financial rewards, noting that innovation, continuous learning, and adaptability are essential qualities for success in today's rapidly evolving digital economy.

He also challenged participants to think beyond conventional ideas, emphasizing that innovative concepts developed locally have the potential to grow into globally competitive businesses.

Participant and small business owner Ferrique Shortte of Union Food Processing, a startup specializing in meat production, said the programme has already demonstrated the value of technology in expanding business opportunities. He explained that the training has enhanced his ability to use digital tools for business planning, branding, and marketing, while also showing how artificial intelligence platforms such as ChatGPT and Gemini can assist with preparing business plans, developing grant proposals, and improving day-to-day business operations.

Delivering remarks on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training, Innovation, Digital Transformation and Information, Chief Education Officer Marvis Findlay-Joseph congratulated participants for investing in their personal and professional development and commended NCTI for creating opportunities that prepare young Vincentians for the future.

Findlay-Joseph urged participants to approach the programme with professionalism, discipline, and commitment, treating each session as they would a real workplace. She highlighted the growing role of artificial intelligence in transforming education, business, and entrepreneurship while stressing the importance of collaboration, practical skills, and a strong work ethic in achieving long-term success.

Over the next three weeks, participants will receive hands-on instruction in Advanced Microsoft Excel, QuickBooks certification, and advanced artificial intelligence applications that extend beyond basic AI tools. The training is intended to equip participants with the practical knowledge needed to establish, manage, and grow successful businesses.

The Business and Technology Leadership Programme reflects NCTI's continued commitment to developing a digitally skilled, innovative, and entrepreneurial workforce capable of driving sustainable economic growth and national development in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

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