

# THE CARIBBEAN BYTE

Building Youth Tech Engagement







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## Youth at the Centre of Digital Inclusion: The 3rd Caribbean ICT Youth Network (CIYN) Meeting

Kingston, Jamaica

The 3rd Caribbean ICT Youth Network (CIYN) Meeting took place in Kingston, Jamaica, on 30 September 2025, as part of CTU ICT Week under the theme “Driving Change, Connecting Future.” The session began with welcome remarks from **Mr. Nigel Cassimere, CTU Deputy Secretary-General**, who underscored the importance of the CIYN in ensuring that the perspectives and leadership of youth remain central to the region’s digital transformation efforts. He emphasized that youth must not only be participants but also shapers of the ICT ecosystem.

Following this, **Mr. Tariq Mohammed, CIYN Chair**, delivered an overview of the network, outlining its progress since its official establishment and the vision moving forward. He highlighted the CIYN’s role as a platform for structured youth engagement in regional ICT policy and initiatives. During introductions, youth representatives shared their backgrounds, interests, and aspirations, setting the stage for a participatory dialogue on the challenges and opportunities facing young people in the digital age.

The keynote address was delivered by **Ms. Blenda Silva**, Youth Focal Point (AMS) at the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**, who spoke on “The Role of Youth in Building a Sustainable and Inclusive Future.” She highlighted the growing recognition of youth as active agents of change in the global ICT landscape and stressed the need for Caribbean youth to seize opportunities to shape policy, innovation, and ethical frameworks, particularly as new technologies such as artificial intelligence rapidly evolve.



Ms. Blenda Silva, ITU Youth Focal Point (AMS) delivering keynote address





A central segment of the meeting focused on opportunities for Caribbean youth presented by partners from across the ICT ecosystem. **Ms. Camille Gayle** from **Intellibus** underscored the importance of mentorship, training, and real-world project exposure for building digital skills. **The Liberty Foundation**, represented by **Mr. Jalen Monzac**, discussed community-driven programmes and partnerships to empower youth through education and innovation, while **Mr. Miguel Ignacio Estrada** of **LACNIC** spoke to regional capacity-building initiatives, emphasizing the importance of connecting Caribbean youth to global internet governance and technical training opportunities. Collectively, these interventions showcased the growing network of partners committed to supporting Caribbean youth in ICT.

The discussions then transitioned into a hackathon exercise on **AI for Productivity and Ethical AI**, facilitated by **Intellibus**. This highly interactive segment challenged youth participants to apply artificial intelligence tools and concepts to practical scenarios, such as streamlining business processes, strengthening data analysis, and driving digital innovation. Participants were divided into groups and tasked with developing innovative

*“Informative, fun, and fiercely motivating. The 3rd CIYN Meeting showed that Caribbean youth are not waiting for the future, we are building it - through creativity, passion, and cross-island teamwork.”*

— Shanelle McPherson















solutions, which they later presented to their peers and facilitators. The exercise not only encouraged collaboration and creative problem-solving but also provided a platform for youth to showcase their ideas. At the close of the session, the top three groups were awarded prizes, recognizing their ingenuity and reinforcing the value of youth-led innovation in the digital space.





*"CTU ICT Week 2025 was my first conference and it delivered! I connected with peers who have shaped CTU's growth and met many youth leaders at the CIYN Meeting who I believe will strive to make a meaningful impact in the telecoms field in the future!"*

— Andre Cunningham



Mr. Miguel Ignacio Estrada of LACNIC



Ms. Camille Gayle of Intellibus





(L-R) Tariq Mohammed, CIYN Chair and Gabrielle Johnson, CIYN Vice Chair

As the meeting drew to a close, **Ms. Gabrielle Johnson, CIYN Vice-Chair**, outlined the network's next steps. She emphasized the importance of institutionalizing youth participation across CTU structures, building stronger collaborations with partners, and mobilizing resources to support sustained involvement of young people in digital governance. She called on youth delegates to remain engaged and proactive in advancing the network's agenda.

For more about the Caribbean ICT Youth Network, check out their webpage on the CTU's website, at <https://ctu.int/ciyn/>



# CALL FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## 5th Caribbean Youth Internet Governance Forum (CYIGF 2026)



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- ☒ Recommend topics of interest
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- ☒ Set up watch parties at your university
- ☒ Become immersed in internet governance!

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Caribbean-Based AI Research

## TTLAB's Record-Breaking Success at IEEE ICTMOD 2025 Conference

**T**TLAB has secured a record-breaking achievement with the acceptance of 21 distinct research papers at the 7th IEEE International Conference on Technology Management, Operations and Decisions (ICTMOD 2025). Which is up from last year's previous record of 16 accepted papers. IEEE ICTMOD is considered to be one of the most prestigious conferences in technology management, operations and decisions. Founded in 2018 and co-organised with IEEE TEMS, the conference activities are delivered by and for academics. This landmark event, scheduled to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, represents an unprecedented level of scholarly output for TTLAB at a single premier international conference.

**Global Visibility and Impact:** This volume of accepted work not only signifies the immense productivity of TTLAB's researchers, but also serves as a powerful external validation of the quality, relevance, and global competitiveness of its research agenda. This accomplishment is a direct manifestation of TTLAB's foundational mission and positions the institution as a significant and influential voice in the international discourse on technology management, data science, and decision-making. All papers presented at the conference are submitted for inclusion in the IEEE Xplore Digital Library, one of the world's most respected scientific databases, solidifying TTLAB's work in the global scientific domain.



**A Highly Selective Arena:** Top-tier IEEE conferences in related fields typically accept only 15% to 30% of submissions. For example, acceptance rates for other premier IEEE conferences range from around 16.5% for DSN to 28% for CNS. This means that 21 acceptances for ICTMOD in such a competitive environment is a testament to producing a large volume of work that consistently meets an exceptionally high standard of originality and significance.

## The Diversity of TTLAB's Research

The 21 accepted papers showcase a research program of remarkable diversity, addressing critical issues across industries and society. The work spans multiple official conference tracks, from Data Science to Disruptive Technologies and Smart Systems. This diversity is a strategic asset, demonstrating the capacity to tackle complex, interdisciplinary challenges. Submissions feature contributions ranging from graduate students, PhD candidates, and junior researchers, many of whom are celebrating their first acceptance as lead authors at a major international conference. This success is a direct reflection of TTLAB's mission to cultivate the next generation of scientific leaders.

A significant portion of the accepted papers demonstrates TTLAB's commitment to solving pressing issues relevant to Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean, and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The publications can be grouped into several key thematic clusters:

- **Data Science, Analytics, and Decision-Making:** A significant portion of the work focuses on applying advanced machine learning to improve decision-making. This includes models for optimizing sports team selection (Ali and Hosein), predicting foreign exchange rates using energy-based indicators (Soodoo and Hosein), and analyzing the socio-economic factors affecting fertility rates (Ramnarine and Hosein).
- **Disruptive Technologies and Social Transformation:** TTLAB is at the forefront of exploring the impact of AI and Large Language Models (LLMs). Contributions include a novel decentralized LLM framework to address data scarcity (Jairam et al.), a comparative analysis of open-source LLMs for industrial maintenance (Tikasingh and Hosein), and strategic frameworks for using AI-driven personalization to create new, disruptive business models (Ramkissoon et al.).
- **Digitalization and Operations Management:** Addressing global supply chain volatility, this research focuses on creating more resilient and efficient systems. Papers include optimization models for fuel delivery (Padmore and Hosein) and optical lens inventory (Sylvester et al.), as well as a collaboration-aware scheduling pipeline for hybrid workforces (Leslie et al.).
- **Digital Technologies and Smart Systems:** This pillar focuses on leveraging technology for broad societal benefit. Innovations include a mobile medication management system for vulnerable populations (Khan and Hosein), a machine-learning approach for detecting leaks in water distribution networks (Weekes and Hosein), and a unique algorithm that generates a real-time Tabla accompaniment for Hindustani music to help preserve cultural heritage (Jayaraj and Hosein).

In addition to this achievement, the TTLAB team also created a podcast discussing the research and the accepted papers, which is available [here](#).



## Visions from the Lab

Our researchers' groundbreaking work continues to garner international acclaim, with recent publications and presentations at prestigious conferences highlighting their innovative contributions to the field. Here's what some of our team members have to say about these exciting developments:

*“As a relatively new member of TTLAB, achieving my first publication as a lead author at the IEEE ICTMOD conference is incredibly rewarding. The guidance, brainstorming support, and fostering environment provided by TTLAB were crucial for my growth in the research field. Being part of TTLAB's record-breaking success motivates me to continue researching and I am truly happy to be a part of this amazing community!”*

- Anthony Jairam



*“Participating in ICTMOD was such a great experience. It gave me the opportunity to apply what I’ve learned in a practical, research-driven setting, and to see how academic work can directly translate into real-world impact. It was also incredibly valuable to receive feedback from reviewers and engage with questions during the presentation, which really helped validate and strengthen my work.”*

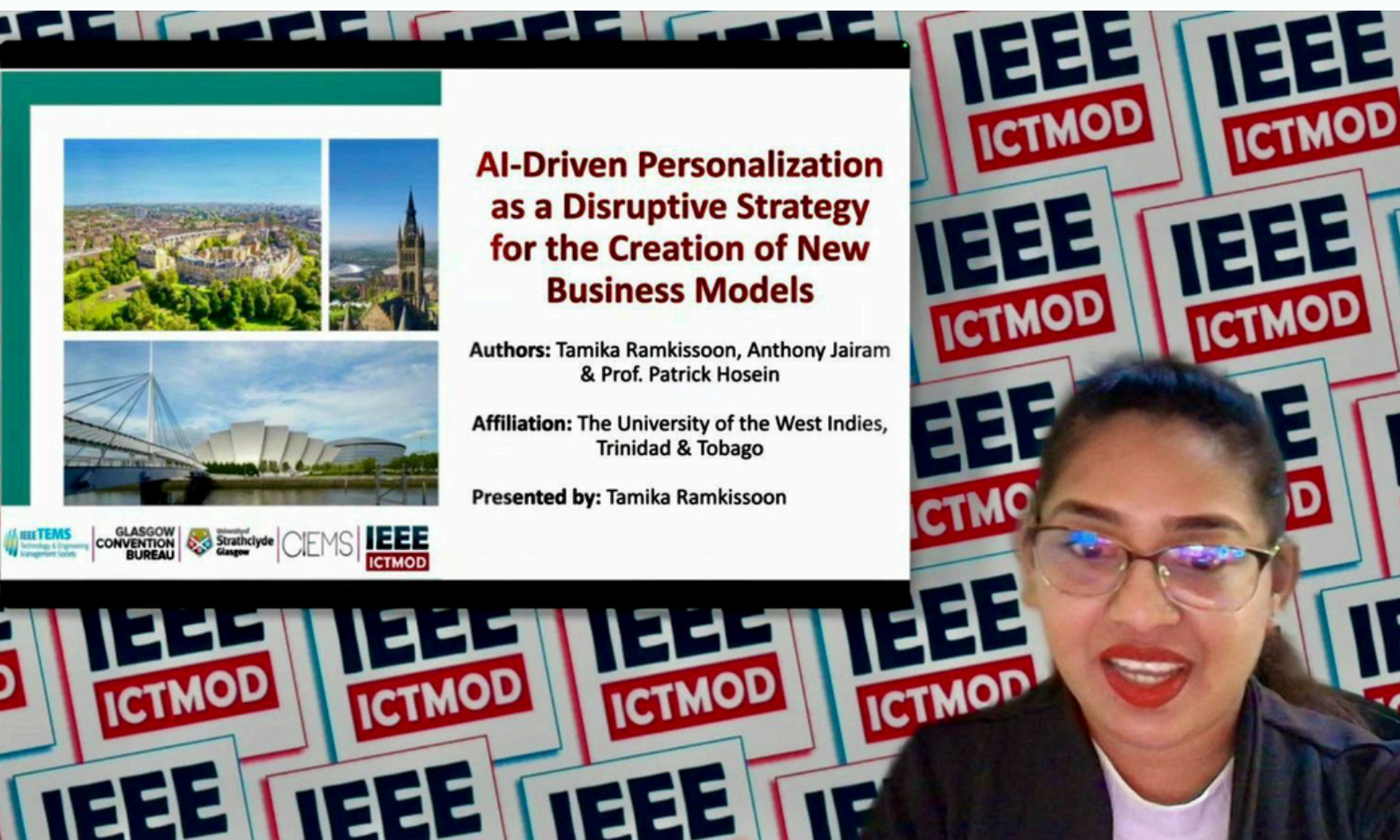
- Julie Koon Koon



## A Forward-Thinking Perspective for TTLAB

This landmark achievement fulfills TTLAB's dual mandate, solving regional challenges with cutting-edge technology and to provide a platform for young scientists and engineers to launch their careers. Having such a strong presence at a prestigious IEEE event fundamentally enhances TTLAB's reputation, opening doors to new collaborations and funding opportunities. This accomplishment positions the lab as a premier destination for top-tier talent from the Caribbean and beyond, and it solidifies its role as a regional leader in the global technology landscape.

As we celebrate this unprecedented success, we are already looking toward the future. The insights gained and the connections made at ICTMOD 2025 will fuel our next wave of innovation. TTLAB is more committed than ever to pushing the boundaries of research and is eagerly preparing to make an even greater impact at ICTMOD in the years to come.



## About TTLAB

TTLAB is a multidisciplinary research group based in Trinidad, dedicated to addressing challenges faced by local and regional companies and civil society organizations. The group specializes in areas including AI, data science and optimization.

Readers and collaborators can learn more about TTLAB's ongoing projects and initiatives by visiting the lab's [website](#) or connecting with the lab on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#), where regular updates and research highlights are shared.





## Youth in Spectrum Management: **45<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF CITEL PCC: II**

Written by Mr. Justin Burrows, The Bahamas

During the week of June 2nd – 6th, I had the privilege of attending the 45th Meeting of the Permanent Consultative Committee II (PCC: II) of CITEL in Mexico City. These meetings are relatively important sessions where regulators, policymakers, industry leaders, and experts from across the Americas and the Caribbean come together to address critical issues and discuss future advancements in telecommunications and spectrum management. The week was marked by dynamic exchanges of knowledge, productive networking, and meaningful advocacy on key policy areas that continue to shape the digital ecosystem of our region.

I found that one of the most valuable aspects of participating in PCC: II was the opportunity to engage with technical experts and other regulators from around the region. Presentations from member states and industry stakeholders offered detailed insights into national strategies, technical studies, and regulatory frameworks, which provided a broader perspective on how different jurisdictions are approaching similar challenges.

Throughout the week, there were in-depth discussions on topics such as spectrum harmonization, and the role of next-generation

such as NGSO Satellite systems play in closing connectivity gaps. Countries shared their preliminary views and positions, and working groups focused on identifying areas of alignment while also highlighting points where further coordination would be needed. Hearing first-hand about the technical studies, ongoing coordination efforts, and spectrum priorities deepened my understanding of how international spectrum policies are shaped and how they impact national and regional strategies. The sharing of case studies and national experiences also added practical context to the technical material, making it clear how decisions taken at PCC: II translate into real-world solutions.

Equally valuable as the formal sessions were the opportunities to network with colleagues across the region. The PCC: II meeting brought together representatives from regulators, industry associations, and private sector companies, creating an environment where bilateral and multilateral conversations could take place. These exchanges provided the chance to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones, while also exploring areas of collaboration.





Networking in this way reinforced the collaborative spirit that underpins CITEL's work and underscored the importance of maintaining open lines of communication among stakeholders. The informal discussions during breaks, side meetings, and social events often proved just as productive as the plenary sessions. They offered a space to clarify positions, exchange views, and even brainstorm creative solutions to challenges that might not have been fully addressed in the official agenda.

Attending the 45th Meeting of PCC: II was a reminder of the value of regional cooperation in shaping the telecommunications landscape. I left the meeting with a deeper appreciation for the hard work that goes into building regional consensus, as well as the importance of active participation in international forums. The week reinforced that connectivity is not simply a technical matter but a driver of social and economic development, and that the decisions we make in bodies like CITEL have far-reaching implications for our countries and communities. Looking ahead, I am committed to continuing this engagement, strengthening partnerships, and contributing to the shared goal of advancing inclusive, innovative, and sustainable telecommunications across the Americas and the Caribbean.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Justin Burrows** is an up-and-coming telecommunications regulator with strong problem solving and critical thinking skills. In his professional capacity, he contributes to shaping policies and frameworks that support spectrum management, connectivity expansion, and the advancement of emerging technologies. In addition to his regulatory role, Justin serves as a Generation Connect Youth Envoy for the Americas region, a global initiative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) that empowers young leaders to contribute to the digital transformation agenda.

Justin holds a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering Technology from the University of The Bahamas, where he built a strong technical foundation that informs his approach to policy and regulation. Combining engineering knowledge with a passion for governance, he is committed to advancing people-centred digital development and fostering youth participation in shaping the future of connectivity.





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### ABOUT THE CIYN

The CIYN is a strategic initiative of the CTU to develop the next generation of ICT leaders: regulators, engineers, policymakers, entrepreneurs, etc.

Key CIYN activities include annual meetings of the CIYN as part of CTU's ICT week, participation in ITU conferences such as the World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 in the United Arab Emirates (sponsored by the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago), and Global Youth Summit 2025 in Cuba. Other activities include capacity building seminars and a newly-launched internship programme, set to take place over July-August 2025 in Trinidad and Tobago.

### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This newsletter is a CTU-CIYN initiative. It showcases contributions and opinions of Caribbean youth on regional ICT-related topics and interests.

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