



*A Summit of the Americas Initiative for Child Literacy*

## Scholastic Donates 150,000 Books to Children in Caribbean

Scholastic, the global children's publishing and media company, has agreed to donate 150,000 books to school-aged children throughout the English-speaking Caribbean as part of the company's sponsorship of the CETT initiative.

Scholastic's Caribbean donation launches with 50,000 children's books, which are being delivered to schools in Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize and Guyana in January, 2004. The books will be used to help all children maximize their reading potential by creating a literacy rich environment in the classrooms. The donation will roll out over a three year period, with a donation of 50,000 books each subsequent year to help train a total of 2,300 teachers and reach approximately 69,000 children in participating Caribbean countries.

***"Scholastic believes children will become lifelong readers and learners if provided with access to wonderful books supported by strong teaching. We are proud to play a role in this important initiative by donating 150,000 books throughout the Caribbean, and we are particularly pleased to also offer classroom resources to teachers in the region."***

Hugh Roome, President  
Scholastic International Group

The Caribbean CETT initiative was developed and implemented by the University of the West Indies and the Joint Boards of Teacher Education, based in Jamaica and Barbados. An outstanding team of educators, led by Dr. Errol Miller of the University of the West Indies, has come together to establish this important program, which began operations in August.



*From left to right: Dr. Errol Miller, Director, Caribbean CETT; Richard Robinson, Chairman, President and CEO, Scholastic Inc.; Karen Harbert, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean; Bill Walsh, Director-CETT Partnerships Program*

“The Caribbean CETT is delighted to enter into a partnership with Scholastic and is enormously grateful to INMED for facilitating the relationship for this exciting initiative,” said Dr. Miller, Director Caribbean CETT. Scholastic is a great company with a track record that is consistent with the mission and mandate of the Caribbean CETT program, and I am confident that this collaboration is to the benefit of the children of the Caribbean.”

The Caribbean CETT program will provide continuing education courses and coaching in best practices in reading education for teachers from primary schools. The program will also provide learning resources to participating primary schools and teachers colleges.



## CETT Forges Ahead in Reading Education

Over the past year, primary school teachers in disadvantaged communities across Latin America and the Caribbean have been busy upgrading their reading education skills through the Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETT) program.

Announced by President Bush at the 2001 Summit of the Americas, the CETT program aims to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and participation in the global workforce by improving reading instruction in the early primary grades. The program provides courses and coaching in best practices in reading education to primary school teachers of grades 1 to 3 and provides learning resources and children's books to participating primary schools. Countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean benefit from the program, which trains master teachers in participating countries to provide professional development and follow-up instruction to primary school teachers.

Teacher training is key in the goal to improve student achievement in reading. According to Lilian Altagracia Ramos Quezada, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher in La Esperanza School in Santiago, Dominican Republic, "The CETT program will provide the teacher with the necessary tools to help the students succeed. The program provides very focused methodologies to improve teachers' classroom management skills."

During the period April, 2003-January, 2004, over 2,200 teachers have benefited from this training. These teachers will reach approximately 56,000 students during the 5 year life of the project.



*Students in the CETT program learn new skills.*



*Teachers in the Andean CETT program*

### **Teacher Training Across the Regions**

◆ In the Caribbean, 365 teachers were trained during the period April-August, 2003. In addition, teacher training colleges' curriculum was revised to include 6 credits for the Teaching of Reading, reaching 531 teachers in Jamaica from the period August, 2003-June, 2004.

◆ In the Caribbean, pre-testing of 10,493 grade 1 to 3 students was held in September, 2003. The results will provide a basis for determining student progress and the impact of classroom interventions as a means of improving student learning.

◆ In the Andean region, the teacher training workshops took place in August and September, 2003. 1,119 teachers were trained. The Andean CETT has also trained a total of 226 school directors, Ministry Authorities and professors at the Teacher Training Institutes.

◆ In Central America, 100 teachers were trained in the Dominican Republic in November, 2003. 400 teachers will be trained in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala in January, 2004. Baselines were also developed for each country.

## Nicaraguan Community Endorses CETT

**Granada, Nicaragua—** Carla Ortega Mejia is an inquisitive 6 year old girl in the Granada province of Nicaragua. She attends 1st grade at the Monsenor Abel Ruiz Castillo school, in an overcrowded, bustling classroom with 34 girls and boys.



*Carla Ortega Mejia*

1st grade is a crucial year in the educational development of young Carla and her classmates, as it is the beginning of formal reading education for children. Thanks to the CETT program, Carla and other children in the 1st to 3rd grades will improve their reading ability and receive much needed supplies including paper, index cards, colored pencils, notebooks, letter blocks, books and magazines. "Reading is important for our children because when they learn to read they become more happy and curious," said her mother, Ligia Mejia Sandoval. "CETT will have a large impact on the community because our children will acquire new skills inspiring everyone—the parents, the school and the municipality to participate in the program."

Nicaraguan society recognizes that compelling educational reforms are necessary to prepare children and their countries for rapidly changing communities and economies. Unfortunately, many problems of the past persist. Scarcity of appropriate teacher development and student materials have exacerbated rates of functional illiteracy. According to Professor Mercedes Aleman of the Dr. Lorenzo Guerrero School in Granada, "CETT will positively affect the future of children by decreasing grade repetition and providing better quality measuring tools. Reading will open doors to their future because it will provide a broader knowledge base."

## ALCOA Sponsors Literacy Centers in Jamaica

Alcoa Foundation has announced a 2 year grant of \$100,000 to improve the quality of primary education in Jamaica. Alcoa, the world's largest supplier of aluminum, joins a growing number of sponsors of the Caribbean CETT program including Scholastic, Air Jamaica and Illuminat.

This important contribution will be used to support the development of Literacy Resource Centers at the 6 participating teacher colleges in Jamaica. A Literacy Resource Center encompasses the space, equipment and materials set aside by the colleges training primary school teachers to support training in the teaching of reading. The purpose of the Literacy Resource Centers is threefold: 1)To exemplify a literacy-rich classroom for teachers and teacher trainees to emulate; 2)To provide classroom teachers with resources and materials that can be used to enhance classroom instruction, including children's books, internet access, duplicating, graphics and computer capability; 3)To support college lecturers in the delivery of instruction in the teaching of reading and in the preparation of teacher trainees for practical teaching in the schools.

**"This project will impact not only education but the social and economic development of Jamaica, as more persons are equipped with the skills necessary to meet the demands of globalization."**

Blossom Laidlaw  
Public Relations and Communications  
Manager—Alcoa Mineral of Jamaica

Alcoa traces its roots in Jamaica back to 1959. Throughout its 45 year history in Jamaica, Alcoa has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Jamaican people, providing extensive community development support through the Alcoa Foundation.

# CETT Makes a Difference in Dominican Republic

## Dominican Republic—

The challenges for young students in Santiago, Dominican Republic begin way before their school day starts. Many children wake up at



*Ramona Rodriguez Silverio*

2:00 AM to lend a helping hand in providing a living for their families through such labor as loading and unloading trucks, cleaning shoes and selling merchandise in the street. It is no surprise that by the time they arrive in school, they are tired and have difficulty staying awake in class.

In the Dominican Republic, the cycle of poverty is very difficult to break. However, thanks to the high quality reading education training that teachers are receiving through the Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra (PUCCMM) as part of CETT, young children in the Dominican Republic are being provided with the literacy skills they need for success in life. These skills will offer children new hope for the future and new opportunities for personal and economic well-being.

“Reading occupies an important place; we know that it is a priority because it is the basis for the rest of the knowledge that the children will acquire,” stated Ramona Rodriguez Silverio, Subdirectora of Miguel Angel Jimenez School in Santiago. “The child that learns how to read and write will be able to enter into another world with increased knowledge—therefore, I believe that even though we have these limitations, the process of reading and writing will enable the child to rise above all of the discomforts in his life,” she added.

Training the teachers to motivate and teach tired, distracted kids is imperative. Previously, many teachers were at a loss on how to transfer the technical information in their learning materials into practical tools for the students. A key element of the CETT program is that master teachers will follow up

with classroom visits over an extended period of time to coach, model and supervise. Competencies range from teacher values and attitudes, to teacher skill base and awareness of responsibilities and rules. Modules address motivation, theory and diagnostics, methodology for teaching reading and writing and materials for teaching and evaluation.

Prior to the CETT program, Sarah Australia de Leon Compres, a 1st grade teacher at the Hoyo del Caimito School in Santiago, received very little effective training in reading instruction. She speaks enthusiastically about the dramatic improvement the CETT program will bring to the teachers and students:

*“This program will bring new life to the teaching process for us. It is sometimes said that teachers are resistant to change, but the training has inspired us to practice what we have learned because it has provided us with new strategies and systematic guidelines that are easy to carry out. This in turn will motivate the student to improve his reading performance and increase his knowledge base.”*

Sarah Australia de Leon Compres



*Amigo De Los Ninos Primary School in Dominican Republic*



**INMED Partnerships for Children**, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, is developing private sector participation to help sustain the CETT program. Founded in 1986, INMED is committed to strengthening communities around the globe by developing and supporting public-private partnerships that bring about sustainable advances in health and education.

For partnership opportunities, contact  
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